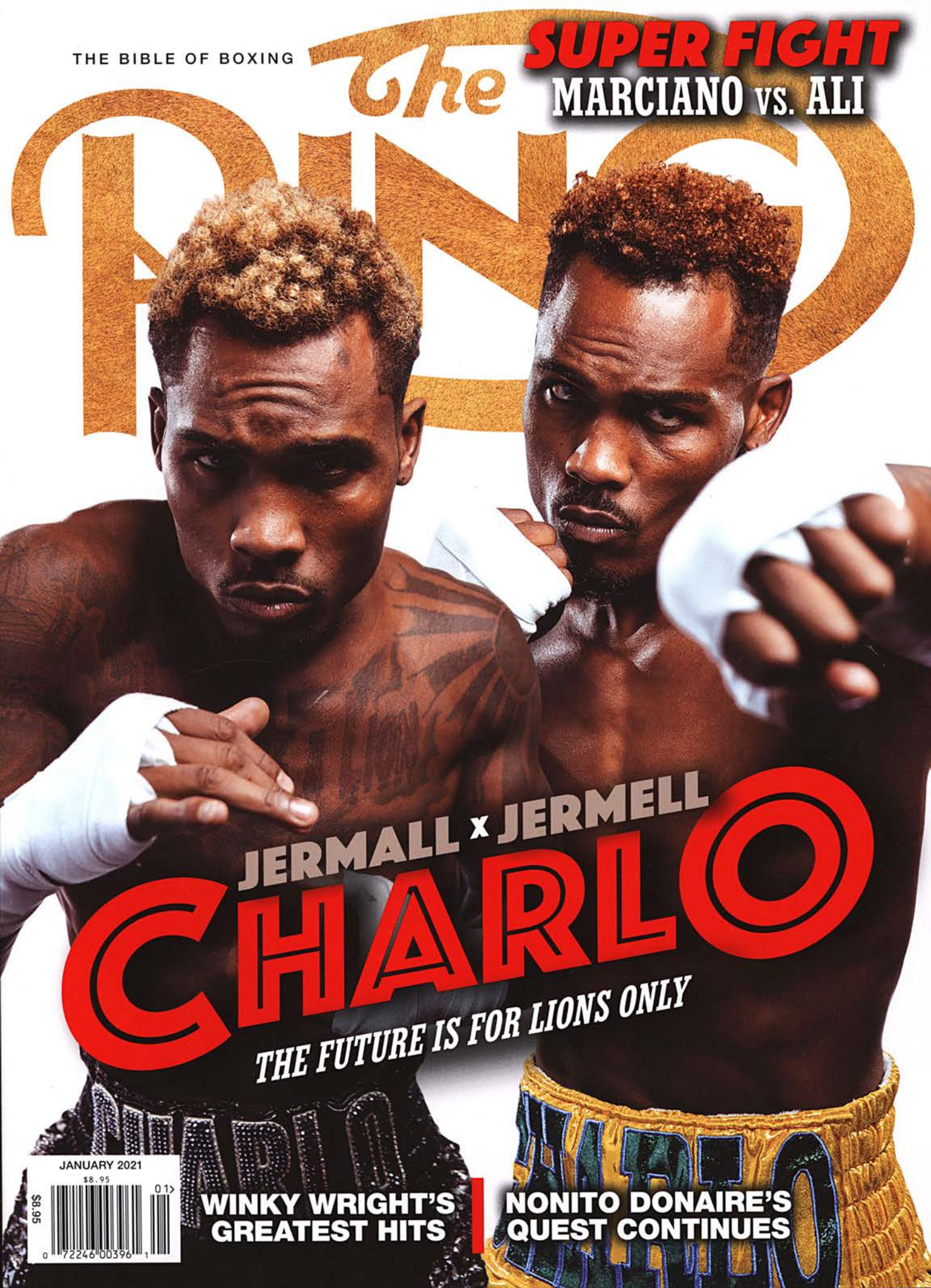
THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The RING

SUPER FIGHT
MARCIANO vs. ALI



JERMALL x JERMELL
CHARLO
THE FUTURE IS FOR LIONS ONLY

JANUARY 2021
$8.95
01
$8.95
0 72246 00396 1

WINKY WRIGHT'S GREATEST HITS

NONITO DONAIRE'S QUEST CONTINUES

Hyper KO2

AVAILABLE NOW!

www.athleteps.com

26 DOUBLE VISION
JERMELL AND JERMALL CHARLO FORESEE A DAY WHEN THEY WILL RULE THE BOXING WORLD
By Thomas Hauser

32 GREATEST HITS: RONALD 'WINKY' WRIGHT
WINKY REPEATEDLY LEFT THE DOUBTERS IN HIS DUST
By Anson Wainwright

38 FLASHBACK
NONITO DONAIRE'S FIRE WAS REKINDLED BY TANGLING WITH A MONSTER
By Dan Rafael

44 SOUL OF A CHAMPION
ADONIS STEVENSON WEARS HIS 'SUPERMAN' NICKNAME WELL
By Joseph Santoliquito

50 THE GREAT OPPONENT
JIMMY YOUNG TESTED THE BEST HEAVYWEIGHTS OF HIS DAY
By Tom Gray

56 JAKE FROM ANOTHER ANGLE
VIKKI LAMOTTA RETELLS THE GENESIS OF *RAGING BULL*
By Thomas Hauser

62 A MATCH MADE IN HARDWARE
THE STRANGE TALE OF THE ALI VS. MARCIANO SUPERFIGHT
By Don Stradley

66 IN THE BLUE CORNER
CHARLES BREWER JR. DEALS WITH ADVERSITY AS BOTH FIGHTER AND POLICE OFFICER
By Joseph Santoliquito

70 THE NEXT GENERATION
A WAVE OF POTENTIAL STARS IS ABOUT TO HIT WOMEN'S BOXING
By Thomas Gerbasi

DEPARTMENTS

2 OPENING SHOT
4 COME OUT WRITING
7 RINGSIDE By Doug Fischer
10 FIGHTER OF THE MONTH
11 NEW FACES By Anson Wainwright
13 JABS AND STRAIGHT WRITES By Thomas Hauser
18 THE FACE OF BOXING By Wojtek Urbanek & Thomas Hauser
21 RING RATINGS
74 WORLD BEAT
78 FROM THE ARCHIVES
80 COMING UP

It should go without saying that Jermell and Jermall Charlo share a connection that is rarely seen in boxing.

COVER PHOTO BY AMANDA WESTCOTT/SHOWTIME

Jose Zepeda momentarily halts Ivan Baranchyk's unceasing search-and-destroy march with a stiff jab during their stirring five-round junior welterweight shootout on October 3 at The Bubble in Las Vegas.

MIKEY WILLIAMS/TOP RANK VIA GETTY IMAGES

OVERDUE

Jessica McCaskill's impressive performance over Cecilia Braehkus left me wondering why The Ring has yet to start including the ratings for women's boxing in its monthly issues. When I first got into boxing, I would use The Ring as a template for who the best boxers are currently as well as for how to best navigate the complex boxing landscape. As a result, for the first few years as a Ring subscriber, I only really followed men's boxing, as it is what The Ring covered for the vast majority of any one issue.

I recently made the decision to start following women's boxing and was very surprised and pleased with what I discovered: a plethora of amazing bouts as well as deeply motivating and interpersonal backstories. While I am by no means an expert on boxing, I've come to find that there are beyond numerous women boxers that have gone through hell and back to get to where they are. And yet, their stories go almost unheard of in the media, which I find tragic. While I cannot comment on if women's boxing is on the rise or not, it should be irrelevant when it comes to showing these women the respect that they have earned and deserve, by at the very least ranking them by weight class in The Ring. I'm not sure what the hold up has been, whether it has been a fear of increased costs of producing the magazine or because The Ring just does not think that its subscribers care about the state of women's boxing in the world today. I am not criticizing any journalist or media publication for this oversight, but I do think that it is something that can and should be corrected.

Professional women boxers are some of the hardest-working people in the sport today. They do not get paid as much as their male counterparts or even get anywhere near to the same kind of public reception, but they go out and they fight anyway. For me, that shows that these individual women truly love the sport of boxing more than anything else in the world, and given that fact, isn't it time that we give them the recognition that is long past due? I know that adding the rankings to women's boxing in The Ring isn't the start or the end of the long battle for equality, but it is progress to say the least, and at the end of the day I'd rather see baby steps toward a brighter future than nothing at all.

Alexander Raphael Capaldo
Denver, Colo.

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: It's tough to say that anything is "on the rise" these days, but the talent pool in women's boxing is definitely deepening (check out Thomas Gerbasi's story on page 70) and so is the realization that there is a strong potential for growth (which in business-speak means money to make). And rightfully so, for all the reasons you mentioned. We couldn't agree more. The Ring established a Women's Boxing Ratings Panel in August and has been posting divisional lists since then on our website, RingTV.com. You'll also be seeing those rankings on these pages very, very soon.

Cleto Reyes USA

Boxing Equipment

IF YOU NEED EQUIPMENT, YOU NEED CLETO REYES (833) REYES US / (833) 73937 87

WWW.CLETOREYESSHOP.COM | | WWW.CLETOREYESBOXING.COM

SCORECARDS

Boxing Aficionado™

MAIN EVENT

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
BLUE CORNER													

CO-MAIN EVENT

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
BLUE CORNER													

PRELIMS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
BLUE CORNER													

PRELIMS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
BLUE CORNER													

HOME OF THE WEIGHT CLASS SNAPBACKS

BOXINGAFICIONADO.COM

ALSO AVAILABLE AT RINGMAGSHOP.COM

The RING

VOLUME 100, NO. 1 / JANUARY 2021

FOUNDER
Nathaniel Fleischer (1888-1972)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Douglass Fischer

MANAGING EDITOR
Brian Harty

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Lamar Clark

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Tom Gray

CONTROLLER
Deborah L. Harrison

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
Kenneth J. Gudaitis

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
Advertising@sepublications.com
215-643-3069

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
BACK ISSUES INQUIRIES
DIGITAL ORDERS INQUIRIES
Sports and Entertainment Publications
P.O. Box 433122
Palm Coast, Fl 32164-3122
800-846-6438
thering@emailcustomerservice.com

SEND EDITORIAL COMMENTS TO:
comeoutwriting@gmail.com
or P.O. Box 90254
Brooklyn, NY 11209

THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 100, NO. 1 (JANUARY 2021), is published 12 times per year by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, P.O. Box 90254 Brooklyn, NY 11209. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11209 and additional post offices. Postmasters: Send change of address notices to: THE RING, P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S.A. and Canada (£5.99 in the U.K.). Subscription price U.S. and possession $39.99 for 12 issues including Canada. Mexico add $5. All remaining countries add $10 for 12 issues per year. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2020 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy of the content of advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES: advertising@sepublications.com. U.S. / Canadian and International distribution by Comag Marketing Group LLC, 155 Village Blvd #200, Princeton, NJ 08540. UK distribution by Seymour Distribution Ltd., 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, England, EC1A 9PT. Printed In U.S.A.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

SIBLING RIVALRY (THE GOOD KIND)

Jermell and Jermall Charlo don't always get along, but they remain fiercely loyal to one another.

It's not uncommon for brothers to be involved in professional boxing, even at the world-class level.

Tommy and Mike Gibbons made headlines in the sport more than 100 years ago. Other talented siblings commanded the spotlight during the decades that followed: Max and Buddy Baer, the fighting Zivic brood (led by Fritzie), Gene and Don Fullmer, Jerry and Mike Quarry, Michael and Leon Spinks, Donald and Bruce Curry, Terry and Orlin Norris, Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko, Juan Manuel and Rafael Marquez, among many other brothers.

World-level twins in boxing are a rarity. Thai terrors Khaosai and Kaokor Galaxy won world titles at 115 and 118 pounds in the 1980s. The Moloneys – Andrew and Jason – are currently Ring-rated in those same weight classes. But the best-known twins in boxing are the Charlos – Jermell and Jermall – and they are arguably the most equally skilled and talented twins we've ever seen in the pro ranks.

In September, as the co-headliners of a Showtime PPV, the Charlos added to their credentials. Jermell earned the Ring Magazine junior middleweight title with an eighth-round KO of Jeison Rosario, which also unified the WBC, IBF and WBA belts. Jermall retained his WBC middleweight title by outpointing top contender Sergiy Derevyanchenko, which advanced him to No. 2 in The Ring's middleweight rankings, behind only Ring champ

Canelo Alvarez and Gennadiy Golovkin.

The Charlos' considerable accomplishments and abilities have earned respect within the boxing world, but their charisma is what sets them apart from boxing-brother standouts of the past (with the exception of Max Baer, Leon Spinks and Terry Norris) and it's their fiery personalities that will eventually intrigue general sports fans.

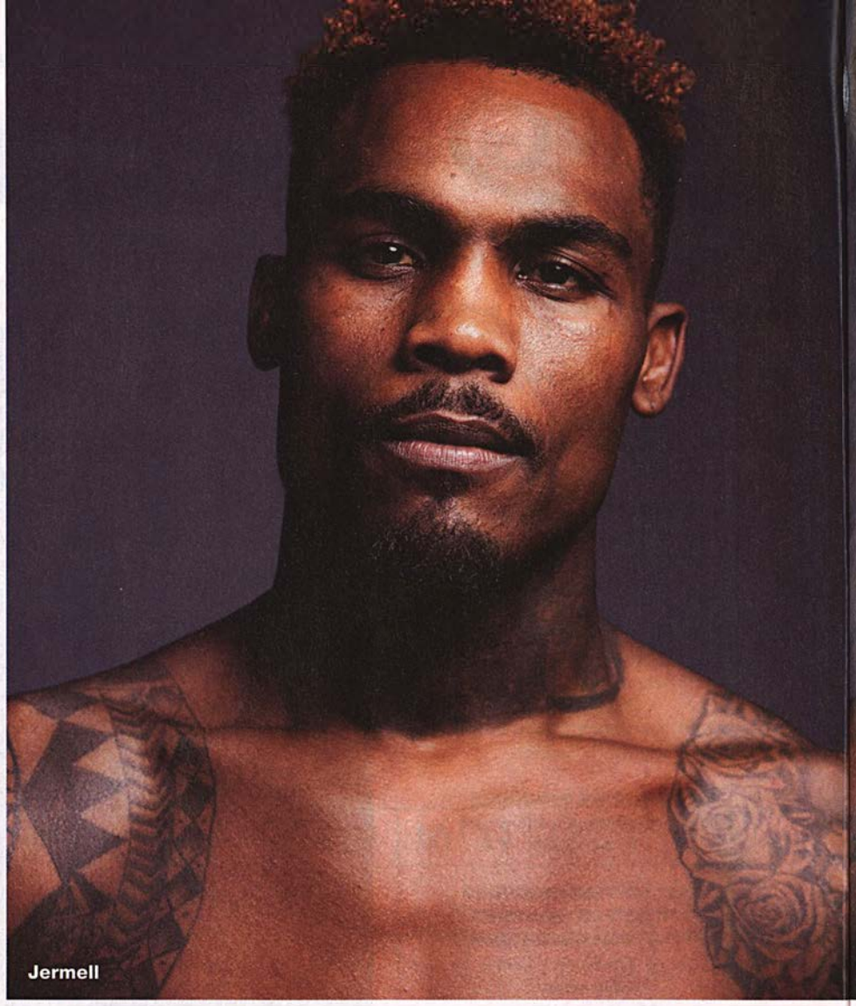
As talented and technically skilled as Floyd Mayweather Jr. was, he needed the polarizing "Money" persona to cross over into celebrity status. However, the 30-year-old Houston residents don't need to create arrogant characters for 24/7-style pre-shows the way Mayweather did. Floyd did that in part to make up for his boring boxing style. The Charlos are fierce and dynamic in the ring and they're stylish, cocky and hot-tempered outside of it.

Their image is their reality, which they share with their fans via social media. An "us-against-the-world" attitude is part of their "Lions Only" brand/creed, and it has attracted a hardcore fan base that follows their Instagram posts and YouTube videos as closely as their fights.

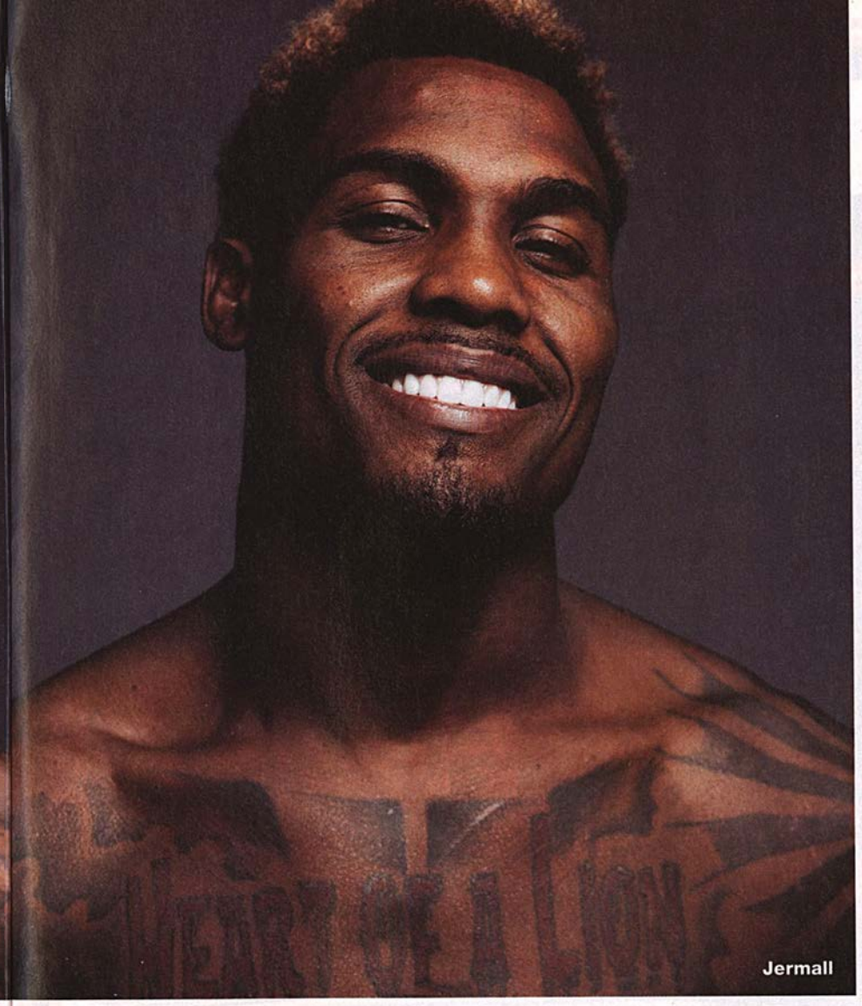
Usually their posts on Instagram – Jermell's is @twincharlo, Jermall's is @FutureofBoxing – share glimpses of the "champion lifestyle," the hard work they put into their craft and the spoils of their success: big houses, luxury cars and SUVs, jewelry, etc.

But the banter between the brothers, often during Instagram live streams, is what garners the most views. It includes playful teasing and heated debates about who's the better boxer, whose possessions are nicer, whose businesses are more legit, who came up with "Lions Only" and who really runs their promotional company of the same name. They clearly enjoy trying to get under each other's skin, and it's fun to witness.

Occasionally, the sibling rivalry gets legitimately hostile during live social media posts, and those antagonistic rants, often laden with F- and N-bombs, attract hundreds of thousands of views on Instagram and YouTube.



Jermell



Jermall

AMANDA WESTCOTT/SHOWTIME

Recent wins have put the twins on the cusp of pound-for-pound rankings.

Jermell delivered a tirade from his home gym in mid-August that went viral when he aimed some criticism at Jermall.

"I would never turn down no motherfuckin' Canelo! Y'all know what it is! I ain't never turning my money down.

"I ain't turning down nothin'."

Jermell, in training for Rosario, was obviously feeling like a lion that morning. Most of his diatribe was about feeling disrespected while proclaiming to be "the O.G." of the 154-pound division. But the Canelo statement was a clear dig at his brother for rejecting (or not answering) a reported offer from Golden Boy Promotions to fight Alvarez, further insinuating that even though he's the boss at junior middleweight, he would have jumped at an offer to fight the Mexican star at 160.

Later in the month, less than 30 days out from their PPV doubleheader, the two continued their Instagram sparring:

Jermell: "We got one month away, what's up?"

Jermall: "My fight harder than yours."

Jermell: "Well, I got more doubters than you. So, I got more to prove than you."

Jermall: "They doubt me more."

Jermell: "Nah, bro, they ain't doubtin' you. They just want to see you lose because you're undefeated."

Jermall: "So? They gave you the easy fight."

Jermell: "Ain't no easy fight. I'm a champion."

Jermall: "Me too, dummy."

Jermell: "I'm fighting for (Rosario's) belts."

Jermall: "I'm fighting to keep my belt."

Jermell: "I already did that four times."

Jermell: "Ay, 'Mall, can you fuck with me in boxing? Like, for real."

(Editor's note for our older readers: He's asking if Jermall believes he's as good a boxer as he is.)

Jermall: "On God." (That's a big "Yes!")

Jermell: "You up there, you up there."

Jermall then agitated his brother by suggesting that he was being difficult with his trainer, Derrick James, as he once was with Ronnie Shields prior to parting ways with the veteran (who still trains Jermall) five years ago.

Jermall: "Your coach working with Errol (Spence). He ain't got time to be driving out to Houston just to work with you."

Jermall: "Your coach (Shields) said I'd never get stronger, and I went on a four-bout knockout streak. Your coach told me never to open a boxing gym. I opened it and it's twice as big (as yours)."

The discussion segued into whether Jermell banned Jermall from his public gym, but when the subject returned to training, their competitive spirit was stoked.

Jermell: "When you train with Ronnie (by the middle of camp), I just want you to know I do that (much) when I start camp."

Jermall: "We don't need 15 rounds. We're not fuckin' Sugar Ray Leonard, dumb ass. We fight 12 rounds. We don't need to fight 15, 30 rounds and shit. That's stupid. That's why you're punch drunk."

Jermell: "Who gonna be punch drunk? I go hard! I go 15, 20 (rounds)."

Jermall: "You never go 15 rounds with me. I guarantee you can't go 15 rounds with me."

Jermell: "I gotta go, I gotta go. I'm having a great time today. He crazy out his mind. Can't be trying to make my company look bad."

Jermall: "Fuck your company, it's my company too."

Jermell: "I'm going to get paid when you fight, thank you!"

Jermall: "Yeah, right."

Sometimes their rivalry gets ugly, but they seem like normal brothers to me. I've got two brothers (separated by one year). We fought, verbally and physically, all the time growing up, but we always had each other's backs.

Derrick James says he's heard about some of the Charlos' Instagram rants aimed at each other, but he's never seen them. He says the rivalry is not as bad as it seems and views it as a positive.

"We spend a lot of quality time together, even during the quarantine, but all I see is a lot of love, a lot of affection," James told The Ring.

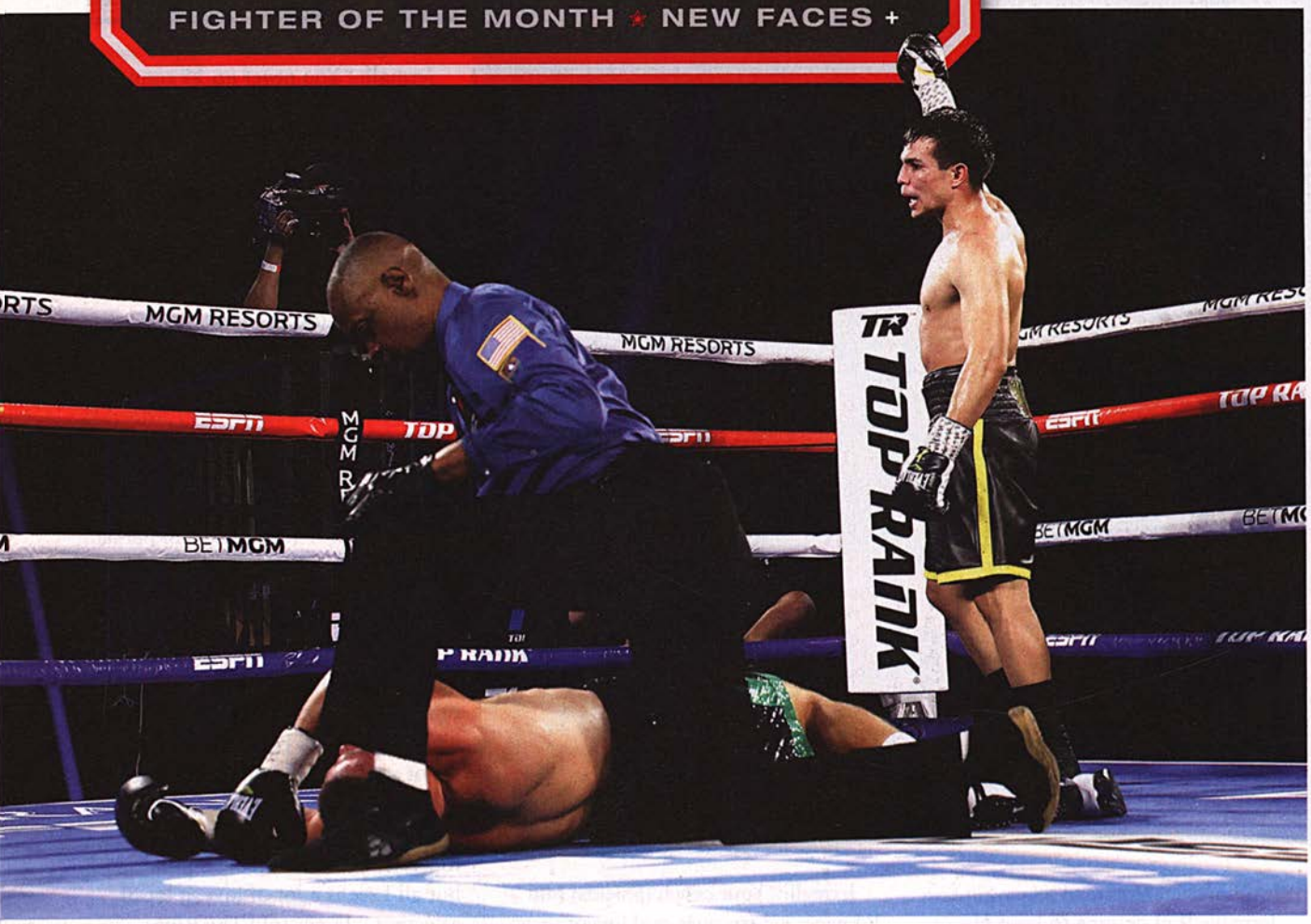
"They've got a strong rapport. They can communicate without talking. They've got that twin thing going on, you know, before they could speak, they had each other.

"So, they're closer than most brothers are, and they are intense by nature. I don't see it as a rivalry. They just inspire each other. They motivate each other.

"When Jermell sees Jermall score a knockout, he wants to do as well as his brother. It's not that he wants to get the knockout or that he trains to score KOs. He just doesn't want to be outdone by his brother. They both want to continue to improve and climb."

If that twin connection and brotherly inspiration leads to the Charlos fighting the best of their divisions, I'm all for it.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH



JOSE ZEPEDA

It's hard to fathom Jose Zepeda ever lacking confidence in the prize ring, especially after the firestorm the southpaw boxer-puncher walked through on October 3.

After scoring a breathtaking fifth-round knockout of Ivan Baranchyk, the 31-year-old former title challenger admitted that he often doubts himself before his fights, including his shot at WBC/WBO 140-pound beltholder Jose Ramirez last February. Zepeda, who dropped a close majority decision to Ramirez, believes he could have pushed harder in that fight.

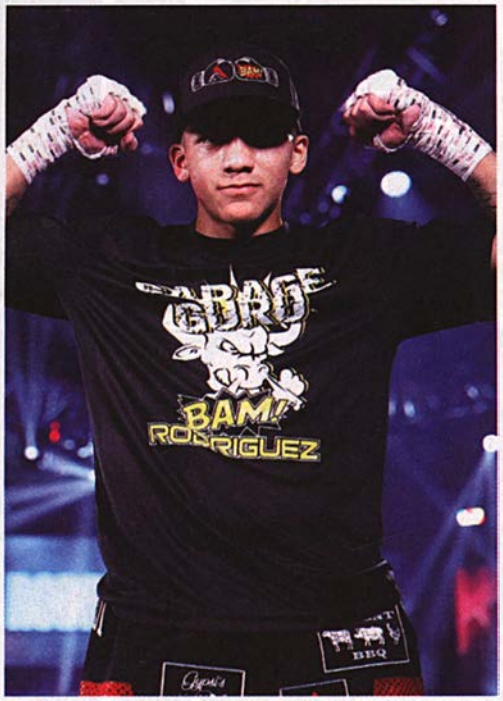
Against Baranchyk, Zepeda let it all hang out. He had no choice. The former IBF titleholder, arguably the strongest junior welterweight in the game, was on a mission of destruction. And Zepeda, who exhibited uncommon composure in the face of Baranchyk's relentless heat, proved that he could dish it out as well as he could take it.

The Ring-rated contenders scored four knockdowns each during the wild shootout. Zepeda (33-2, 26 KOs) was down twice in Round 1, once in Rounds 2 and 5; Baranchyk (20-2, 13 KOs) was dropped in Rounds 2, 3, 4 and 5, suffering the final knockdown in chilling fashion.

Their instant classic is the clear frontrunner for Fight of the Year, KO of the Year and maybe Round of the Year (Round 2 or 5, take your pick).

"I know I'm tough," Zepeda told ESPN's Mark Kriegel during his post-fight interview. "I didn't know how tough."

Zepeda is more than tough. He's a sharpshooting technician with impeccable timing and poise. With hard-earned confidence added to his skill and experience, he's stamped himself as a major player in the 140-pound division.



MIKEY WILLIAMS/TOP RANK

NEW FACES

JESSE RODRIGUEZ

By **Anson Wainwright**

Age: 20
Hometown: San Antonio, Texas
Weight class: junior flyweight
Height/reach: 5-foot-4 (163 cm) / 67 inches (170 cm)
Amateur record: 77-13
Turned pro: 2017
Pro record: 12-0 (8 knockouts)
Trainer: Robert Garcia
Manager: Robert Garcia
Promoter: Teiken Promotions
Twitter: @210bam

BEST NIGHT OF PRO CAREER AND WHY: Rodriguez scored an eye-opening first-round stoppage over usually durable veteran Janiel Rivera on September 5 at The Bubble in Las Vegas.

"I was given the opportunity to fight on ESPN and I got a sensational knockout," Rodriguez told The Ring. "It was from a beautiful angle, and a lot of people took notice of that and my career and who I am. It was like my coming-out party. I'm really happy with my performance and the way things turned out that night."

WORST NIGHT OF PRO CAREER AND WHY: Rodriguez fought Josue Morales underneath the first WBC heavyweight title clash between Deontay Wilder and Tyson Fury in December 2018. The 20-year-old admits to being unsettled, buried deep on the undercard.

"It was a PBC card. They're usually crazy; you never know when you're going to fight," he recalled. "I was in the locker room. I believe I was the fifth fight, but after the third fight, they wanted to throw me in quick. It was scheduled to be eight, but they moved it to six and tried to fit me in.

"I wasn't really warmed up. I didn't even have my gloves on. They came in and were like, 'Rodriguez, you're up.' I had to glove up. I didn't even have time to warm up. I had to run to the ring. I wasn't feeling it that fight. I was in cruise control."

Nonetheless, he won a six-round shutout decision on all three judges' scorecards.

WHY HE'S A PROSPECT: Rodriguez won the National Silver Gloves title in 2014, was the runner-up at the AIBA Junior World Championships in 2015 and won the Junior Open and Youth National Championships in 2015 and 2016.

His first fight as a professional was in Mexico just two months after his 17th birthday. He is trained by Robert Garcia in Riverside, California, where he rubs shoulders with top prospects and world-class fighters such as Vergil Ortiz, Jose Ramirez and Mikey Garcia.

"I get to spar with ex-world champion Carlos Licona. I spar with a lot of Top Rank prospects. I spar with my brother (Ring-rated junior bantamweight Joshua Franco). There's a lot of tough sparring; there's never any easy sparring over here. I get the best work possible."

These gym experiences coupled with fighters maturing at a younger age in the lighter weight classes mean Rodriguez will advance quickly as a pro.

"I would love an opportunity to go to Japan (where two of the current titleholders reside) and fight for the world title," he said. "I would love to go over there and fight them and take their belts."

The young Texan says one particular attribute sets him apart from the competition.

"Footwork," he said. "Most fighters in my weight class don't move the way I do. It makes me stand out. It gives me a bit of an advantage."

"I think he's good at everything," said Garcia. "His offense, his speed, his power … he's also very smart in the ring and uses angles very well. I think he's a complete fighter, maybe one my most talented fighters."

WHY HE'S A SUSPECT: There are no soft touches in the talent-laden junior flyweight division, and the well-grounded fighter intends to continue to improve across the board.

"A little more power, a little more speed, it will come with my growth," Rodriguez said. "I'm only 20 years old, so I'm going to grow in that."

Garcia is keen to keep his charge focused on the task in hand.

"The only thing I've talked to him about is his defense," said Garcia. "Not because he gets hit a lot – because he doesn't get hit much during his fights – but during training sometimes he's a little careless."

STORYLINES: Rodriguez was born and raised in San Antonio, the youngest of four brothers.

"My brother (Franco) always wanted to box and my mother never let him," said Rodriguez, who first went to the gym at 9 years old. "One day, something in her let him box for about a week. I was going to the gym just to watch my brother. The next week, I was like, 'I want to try this out.'"

The rest is history. Recently, Rodriguez enjoyed seeing his elder sibling upset Andrew Moloney.

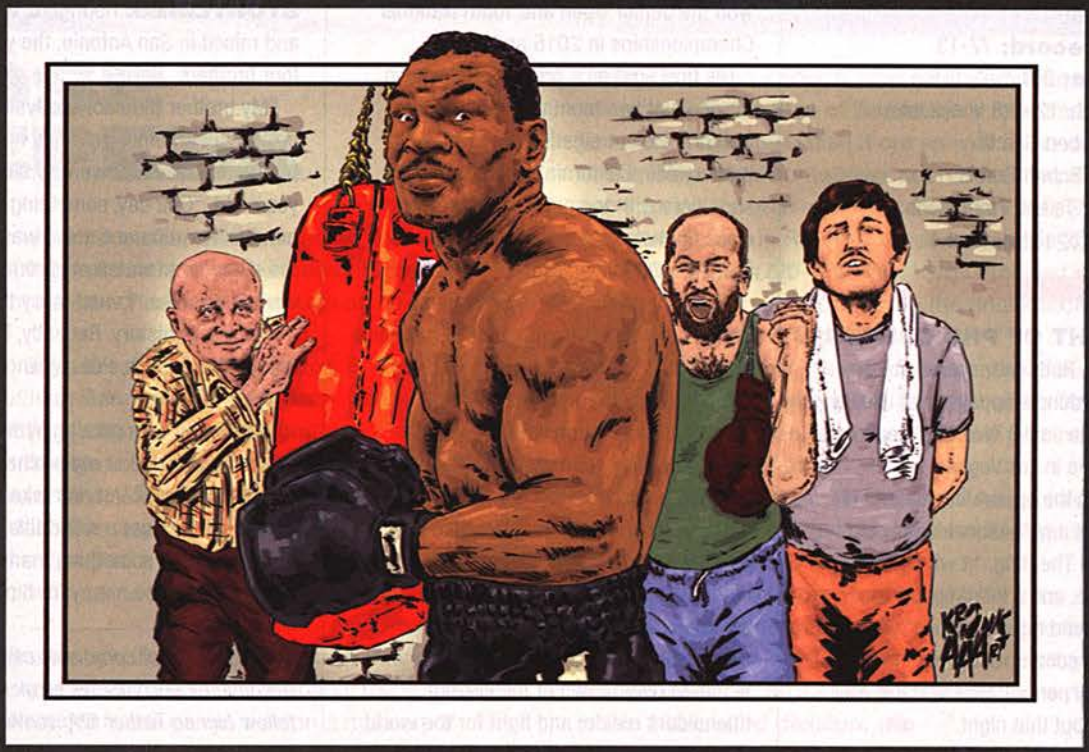
"That night was pure enjoyment," he said. "I was proud of my brother. I've seen him at his worst and take his losses, and to see him get a world title (the WBA "regular" belt), something many boxers can't do, I was so happy for him."

Questions and/or comments can be sent to Anson at elraincoat@live.co.uk and you can follow him on Twitter @AnsonWainwright.

ILLUSTRATIONS & CARTOONS

KRONK AAART .COM

WITH A FOCUS ON BOXING



GALLERY PRINTS T-SHIRTS

JABS AND STRAIGHT WRITES

BY THOMAS HAUSER

MUHAMMAD ALI, JOHN THOMPSON AND MORE

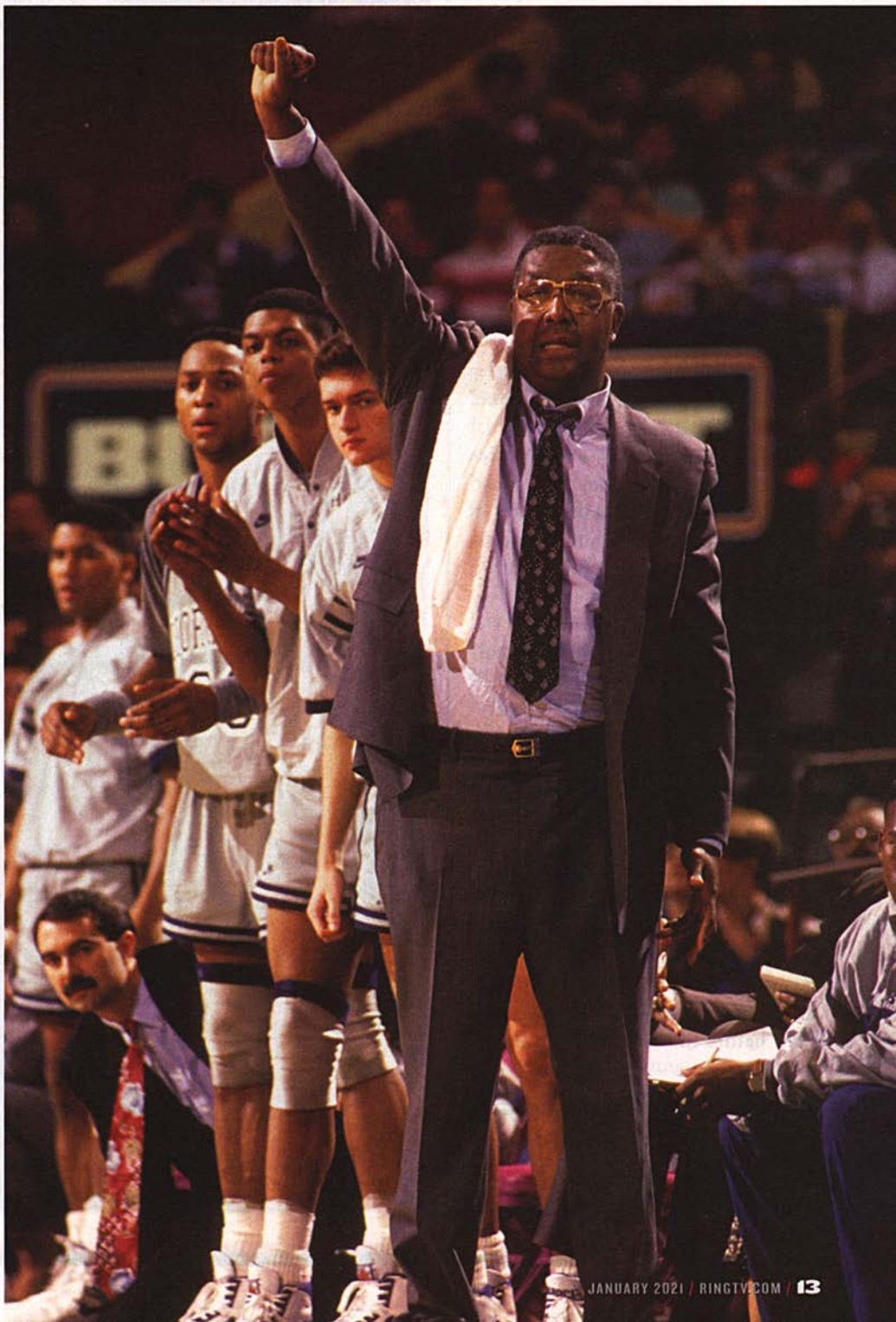
John Thompson, who died recently at age 78, was important.

Thompson's early years in the spotlight were spent as a backup center for Bill Russell on the Boston Celtics championship teams of 1964-65 and 1965-66. Then he turned to coaching.

In 1972, Thompson took over a Georgetown squad that had compiled a dismal 3-23 record the previous season. At the end of his coaching career, his teams at Georgetown had amassed 596 victories against 239 defeats for a .714 winning percentage. He was the first Black head coach to guide a team to the NCAA men's national basketball championship. And his program became a magnet for future NBA stars like Patrick Ewing, Alonzo Mourning, Dikembe Mutombo and Allen Iverson.

But Thompson did more than coach basketball. He was strongly principled and saw his role as that of a teacher and a molder of young minds. Years ago, I had the opportunity to talk with him about Muhammad Ali and the role that Ali had played in his own personal journey as a person and as a coach. This is what Thompson told me:

"For me, it started with curiosity; I found Ali to be



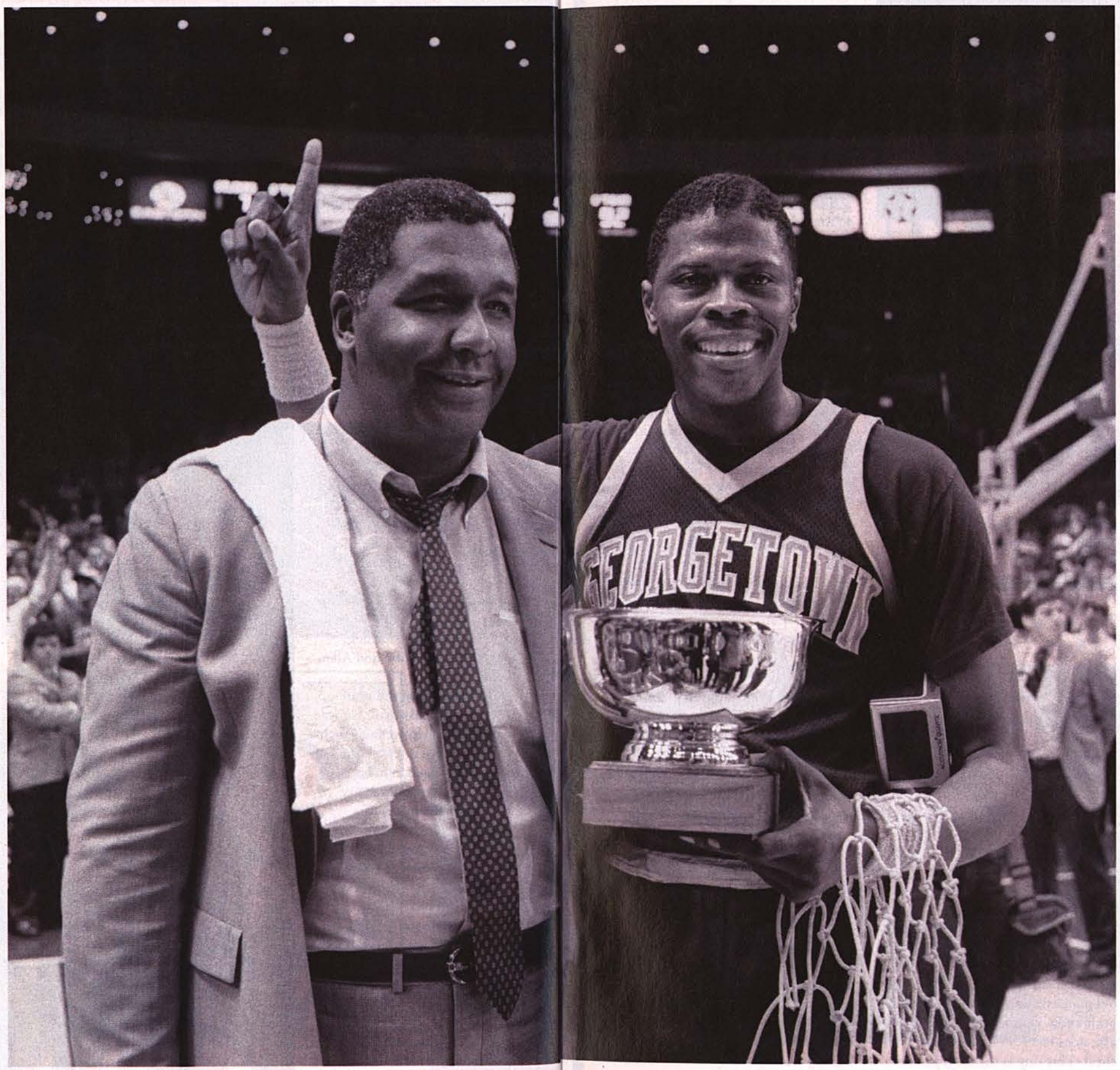
John Thompson, a mentor for countless disadvantaged players for Georgetown's basketball program, was inspired by Muhammad Ali.

entertaining. Then I realized that, in addition to being loud and outspoken, he was a fine athlete. And if he'd never done anything more with his life, that alone would have been an enormous contribution because he pulled us away from that docility, where Black people who were successful sat around acting humble. Ali gave us a role model we could look to, someone who was talented, confident, cocky, and a whole lot more that Black people weren't supposed to be. But more important, when the time came, he stood up for what he believed.

"You know," Thompson continued, "most people, when they reach the plateau Ali was at as heavyweight champion, tend to conceal their true feelings. There's so much to lose. There are risks they won't take. But society needs people who are visible to stand on principle. We need encouragement. We need to see examples. Even as adults, we need role models who will say this is wrong and that's right. And I'm not talking now just about Black and white. I'm talking about integrity and dignity and courage for all people. Those qualities are important to me. I can't measure exactly where I learned them, because I've benefited from many people in my life. But certainly Ali was an inspiration to me. Very definitely, he contributed to the man I am today."

And there was a humorous footnote to our conversation.

"In 1989 before the start of the NCAA tournament," Thompson recalled, "I played a tape of Ali for the team. It was a tremendous piece, a documentary that I wanted them to see as an inspirational thing. Then, in the locker room right before the first game, I talked with them about motivation and confidence. And just before they went out on the floor, the kids put their hands together and shouted, 'Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee. Rumble, young man, rumble. Ahhh!' Then the game started and we came within a basket of losing to Princeton."



Thompson stands beside fellow icon Patrick Ewing after the Hoyas won their second straight Big East title in 1985.

★ ★ ★

Mark Kriegel recently wrote an appreciation of Pete Hamill (one of his mentors), who died earlier this year. Kriegel, an acclaimed wordsmith in his own right who now works for ESPN, talked about the influence that Hamill had on his career and referenced a novel that Hamill encouraged him to write. *Bless Me, Father* was published by Doubleday in 1995.

"Looking back," Kriegel wrote self-disparagingly in his tribute to Hamill, "I take solace in what a friend from our short-story group said: 'Some of us got to write the bad ones.' I wince when I look at those pages. But it's nothing compared to the shame I'd have felt if I never wrote it at all."

That piqued my interest. Kriegel has written biographies of Joe Namath, Pete Maravich and Ray Mancini. I was curious to see what he'd done in fiction. So I went to AbeBooks.com (the best used book site on the internet) and bought a hardcover copy of *Bless Me, Father.*

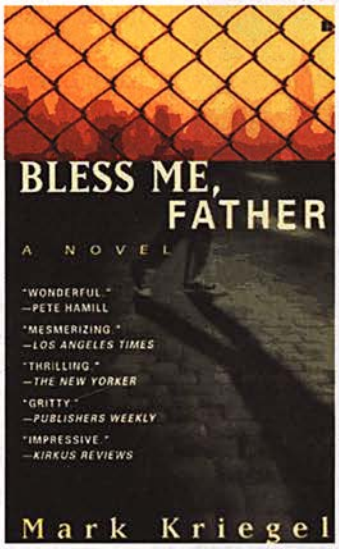
Kriegel wrote about cops and courts as a reporter for the New York Daily News prior to moving to the New York Post as a sports columnist in 1991. He started writing *Forgive Me, Father* in 1992 at age 29 and finished the first draft around the time of his 31st birthday.

Chapter One introduces the reader to Frank Battaglia, a street thug who has run his record as a pro to 13-0 and wants to fight at Madison Square Garden. Through mob connections, he gets an undercard slot against a

ESPN's Mark Kriegel has authored a novel and best-selling autobiographies.

journeyman loser at the old (1965) MSG. Without a set-up opponent or his friends and a baseball bat to back him up, Battaglia (a bully and coward at heart) quits in the first round.

Fast-forward to 1986. Battaglia has become a force in the mob hierarchy. The oldest of his two sons (Buddy) has committed suicide by jumping off a roof. Frank forces his surviving son (Nicky, age 16) into the gym to train for the Golden Gloves. The last thing Nicky wants to do is box and get hit.



Forgive Me, Father is fast-moving pulp fiction that moves nicely from scene to scene with boxing as a recurring theme.

Nicky trains at Costello's Gym, "where broken old men ride piggyback on the vain dreams of young men." His trainer – Toodie Gleason – is evocative of Teddy Atlas with an Atlas-like scar on his cheek. Toodie was trained as a young man by Paddy Blood (based on Cus D'Amato) who was in Battaglia's corner at Madison Square Garden on the night that Frank quit.

As Toodie wraps Nicky's hands on his first day in the gym, he tells Nicky, "I know why you're here. You're here same as me. Your old man asked us to be here. But we both know your old man don't really ask, does he? . . . Here you can't cheat. This ring is the most honest place in the world. You can't hit no one with a bat. Can't get your boys. Can't talk your way out of it. In the ring, you can't call your old man . . . You gotta trust me. I'm gonna trust you. Otherwise someone gets hurt. And I ain't someone . . . Guys will punch you in the face. They will lay you right the fuck out. This shit is for real, pally."

After some perfunctory instruction on the first day, Kriegel writes, "Already, Toodie knows enough to tell that the kid is naturally graceful, a good athlete. But not a fighter."

I liked the first two-thirds of *Bless Me, Father.* Then the book fell apart for me. The rest seemed contrived and unrealistic. When I shared this thought with Kriegel, he told me that he felt the exact opposite.

"The only part I'm happy with is the last part," Mark said. "The first part is too talky and too much like all the gangster movies I ever saw. The last third is more original."

Will Kriegel write another novel someday?

"I don't know," he answered. "I hadn't thought about it for a long time, but I'm thinking about it now. Making it up is hard. But I might try again."

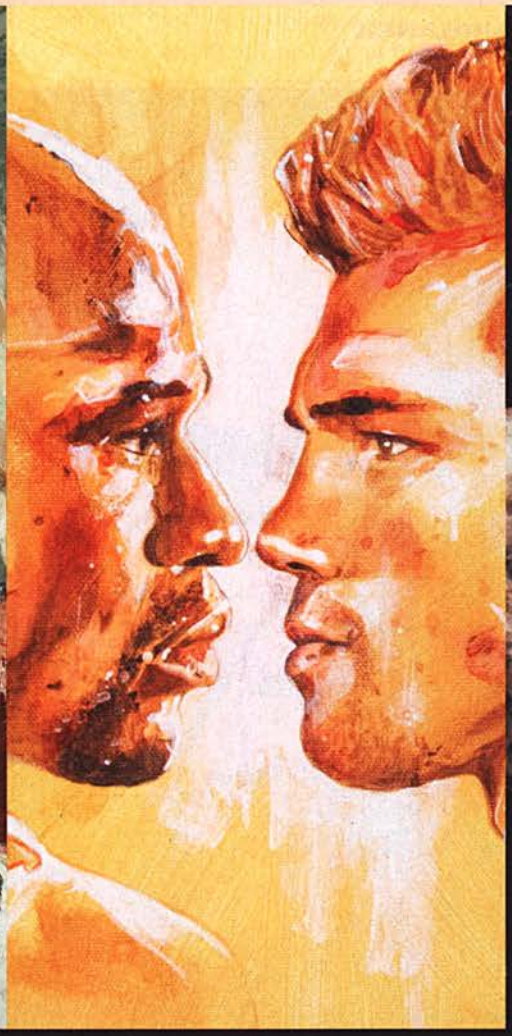
And despite his reservations about *Bless Me, Father*, Mark is glad he wrote it.

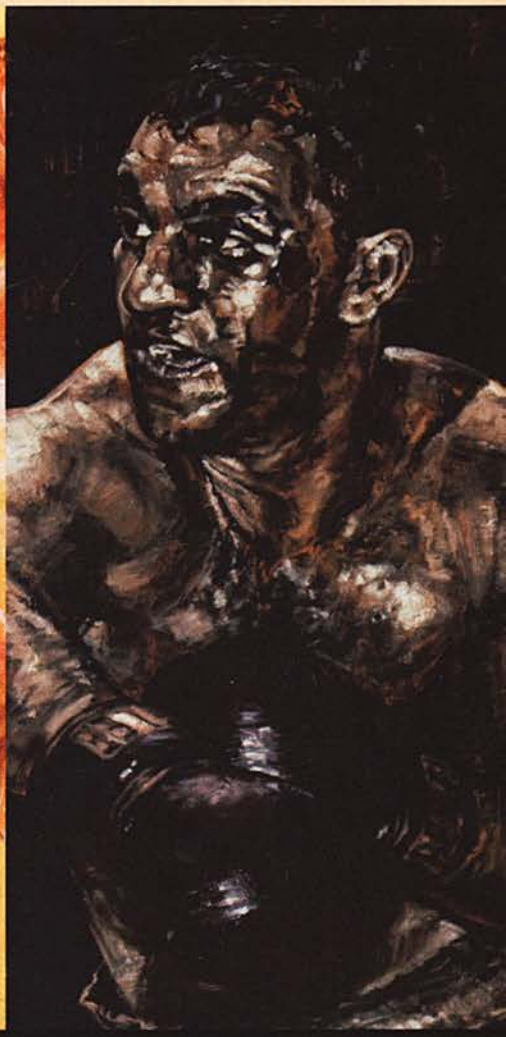
"The best thing about the book for me," Kriegel said, "is that it introduced me to themes I would use well later in my career. It was a North Star that illuminated the direction in which I was supposed to go." RING

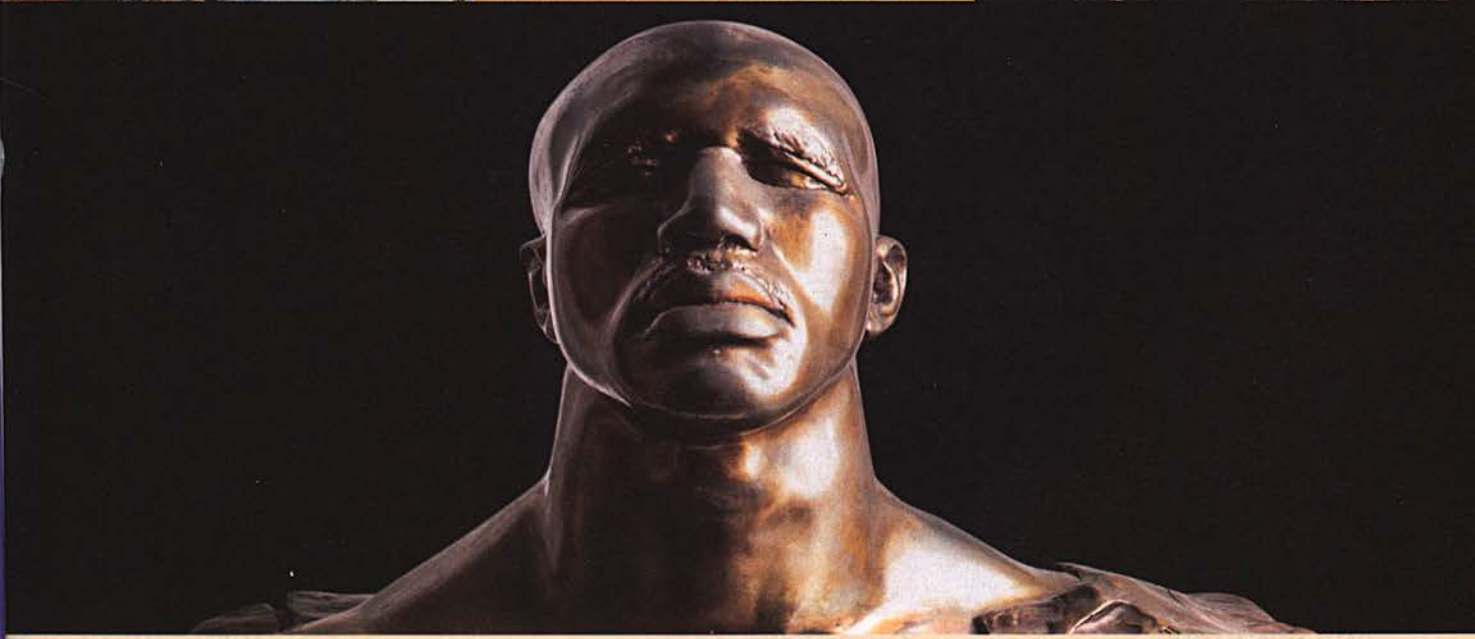
Thomas Hauser's email address is thomashauserwriter@gmail.com. His most recent book – Staredown: Another Year Inside Boxing – was published by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism. He will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame with the Class of 2020.

Meg
THE ART OF BOXING GALLERY

MEG, THE ART OF BOXING GALLERY
MABG INTERNATIONAL
SDM – 14 AVENUE DE L'OPÉRA
75001 PARIS
FRANCE

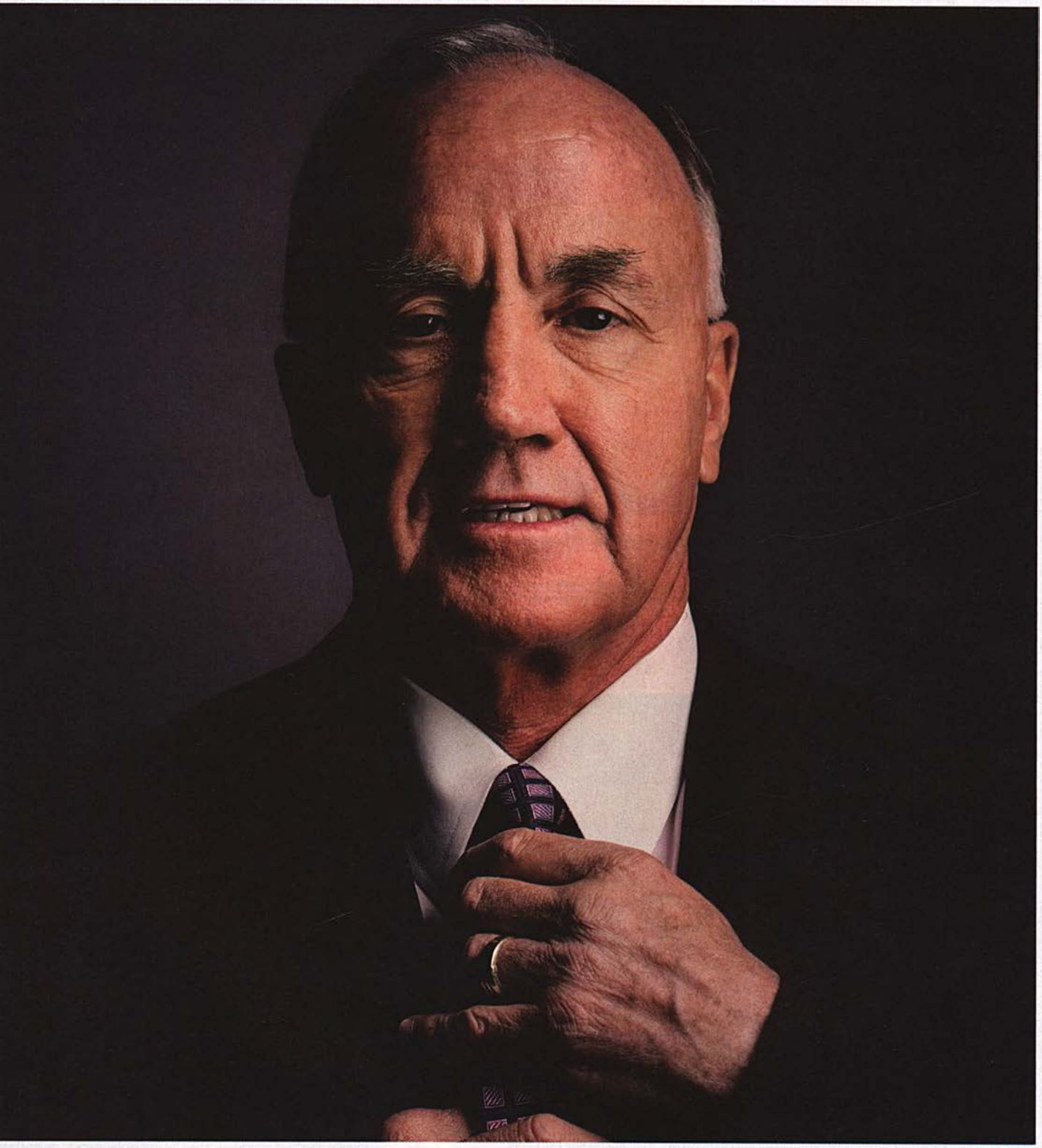






OUTSIDE THE RING

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **WOJTEK URBANEK**
TEXT BY **THOMAS HAUSER**



BOB BENNETT

THE FACE OF BOXING

Boxing fans know who the fighters are. Promoters, trainers and managers are also sometimes in the spotlight. But there are other threads in the fabric of boxing.

Bob Bennett was a captain in the United States Marine Corps and spent more than two decades with the FBI. In his current position as executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission (a job he has held since 2014), he oversees the day-to-day operation of the NSAC. In recent years, he has pushed for more effective enforcement of rules and regulations designed to combat the use of banned performance-enhancing drugs in boxing and worked with the Voluntary Anti-Doping Association to achieve that end.

Nitin Sethi, a neurologist whose primary practice is affiliated with Weill Cornell Medicine (one of the best research and patient care centers in the world), is chief medical officer for the New York State Athletic Commission. In an environment where politics too often take precedence over sound governance, Dr. Sethi has been steadfast in his commitment to protecting the health and safety of fighters.

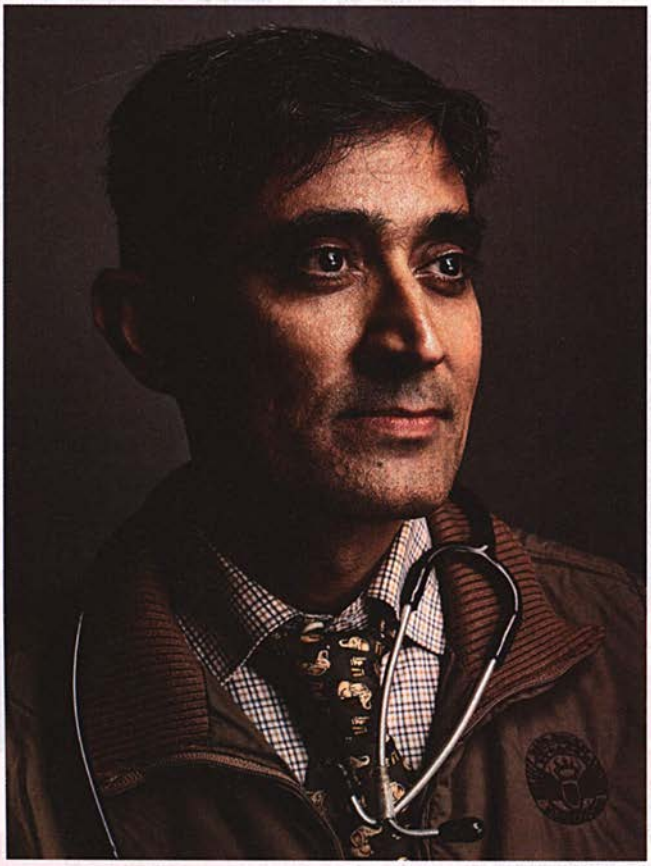
Ed Brophy was the driving force behind the creation of the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota and has been executive director of the Hall since its inception three decades ago. As such, he has played a pivotal role in the preservation of boxing history.

"I photographed Bob Bennett at the final pre-fight press conference for Canelo Alvarez against Sergey Kovalev," Wojtek Urbanek recalls. "He had an aura of authority about him when he was in front of the camera. Later, we had time to talk and he was more easygoing and less guarded than before.

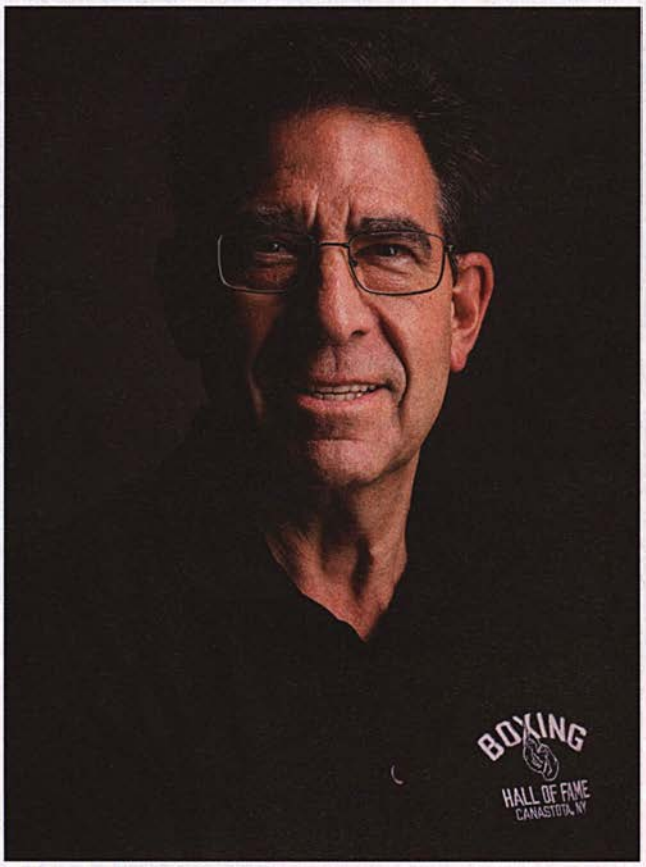
"Nitin Sethi sat for me at the final pre-fight press conference for Gennadiy Golovkin against Sergiy Derevyanchenko," Urbanek continues. "He seemed like a compassionate man and someone who is very good at what he does. I felt that if my life was at stake, this is a doctor I would want.

"Ed Brophy seemed comfortable in front of the camera. Familiar with media, not at all camera shy. There's also something very determined about him. Listening to him talk with the people around him before and after he sat for me, it was clear that he cares about boxing." RING

Wojtek Urbanek is based in New York and can be reached at studio@wojtekurbanek.com. Thomas Hauser's email address is thomashauserwriter@gmail.com.



NITIN SETHI



ED BROPHY

HIT THE RING SHOP FOR THE HOLIDAYS

ANNY PACQUIAO
SPECIAL ISSUE
THE BIBLE OF BOXING
The RING
FOREWORD BY
LARRY MERCHANT

THE BIBLE OF BOXING
The RING
EXCLUSIVE:
MIKE TYSON
REVIEWS
HEAVYWEIGHT
HISTORY
EGACY OF
AMATO
FAC
TYS

WWW.RINGMAGSHOP.COM

RATINGS

The Ring Ratings through fights of Oct. 10, 2020

The Ring Ratings Summary

CRUISERWEIGHT: Without the participation of Aleksandr Usyk and Murat Gassiev, it's no surprise that the second iteration of the World Boxing Super Series cruiserweight tournament had a kind of "leftovers" feel, but the final between Mairis Briedis (No. 1 last month) and Yuniel Dorticos (No. 2) was a satisfying enough meat-and-potatoes fight. Dorticos (who lost to Gassiev in the Season 1 semifinals) consistently pushed forward while Briedis (who was knocked off by champion-to-be Usyk last time around) fired back with enough power and accuracy to soften up the Cuban for a later-rounds takeover. With two cards at 117-111 in his favor and the third at 114-114, Briedis won the vacant Ring belt and assumed the championship position in the ratings while Dorticos suffered no shame in becoming the No. 1 contender. The upward migration made room at No. 10 for Poland's Michal Cieslak.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: Dominic Boesel (No. 9) dropped out, but not before giving a chilling demonstration of what happens when you offer no defense against a 175-plus-pound professional puncher (German veteran Robin Krasniqi in this case) charging forward with a full-trajectory fist trained on your jawbone. Fresh off his 19th knockout, Russia's Umar Salamov took the No. 10 spot.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT: David Lemieux kept the gears greased with a fifth-round knockout of unrated Francy Ntetu to maintain his position at No. 5.

MIDDLEWEIGHT: Jermall Charlo (No. 3 last month) moved up to No. 2 after a well-earned unanimous decision over Sergiy Derevyanchenko, who once again gave an elite middleweight a test but came up short. The Brooklyn-based Ukrainian stayed put at No. 4.

Two weeks later, Liam Williams (No. 10 last month) iced Andrew Robinson with a left hook to the body and rose to No. 9. The previous No. 9, Maciej Sulecki, was pushed off the list in favor of adding Zhanibek Alimkhanuly at No. 10 after the Kazakhstani newcomer impressively knocked out Gonzalo Gaston Coria (unrated) in the second round.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT: The second half of our cover duo and the second newly crowned Ring champ in this month's update, Jermell Charlo (No. 1 last month) grabbed the "C" spot with an eighth-round knockout of Jeison Rosario (No. 2). Charlo was already doing some great work, including a beautiful left hook that set up a knockdown in Round 6, but the fight will be remembered for the left jab aimed at Rosario's belly button – a punch that by Charlo standards looked pretty harmless and even ricocheted off an elbow, but it landed with enough thud to sap the Dominican's wind and drop him for the KO. Rosario gave up his IBF and WBA belts and dropped to No. 3 while the No. 10 slot opened up for Tim Tszyu, who resembles his famous father almost as much as the Charlos do each other.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT: Keeping our attention on the design flaws of the human torso and the subtle techniques used to exploit them, division champ Josh Taylor used a nearly invisible left hook that traveled about 18 inches to hit the "off" switch on Apinun Khongsong's liver, dropping the unrated Thai fighter for the 10-count in Round 1.

The following weekend, Fighter of the Month Jose Zepeda rose from No. 6 to No. 3 after a five-round K-fest (eight knockdowns and one knockout) with Ivan Baranchyk, who dropped from No. 3 to No. 5. See page 10 for more details.

FEATHERWEIGHT: Despite one mail-in scorecard giving him a shutout victory, Mark Magsayo (No. 5) had some difficulty in winning a split decision over Rigoberto Hermosillo (unrated), so the undefeated Filipino held his position and has been put on demotion-watch by the Ratings Panel.

Former 122-pound beltholder Emanuel Navarrete got his first official result since moving up to 126 (his sixth-round TKO of Uriel Lopez in June is not recognized by Boxrec.com because it took place in Mexico without the presence of a boxing commission due to COVID-19 restrictions), grabbing the vacant WBO belt with a narrow unanimous decision (a pair of knockdowns made the difference) over Ruben Villa at The Bubble in Las Vegas. Villa slipped from No. 8 to No. 10 and Navarrete debuted at No. 5, which pushed bottom-ranked Christopher Diaz off the list.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT: Daniel Roman (No. 3) and Brandon Figueroa (No. 5) notched wins in separate bouts, but Roman struggled to outpoint former titleholder Juan Carlos Payano and Figueroa's stay-busy stoppage of Damien Vazquez (unrated) didn't prove much, so both held their positions.

A couple weeks after that in Japan, Hiroaki Teshigawara extended his knockout streak to six in a row by stopping Shingo Kawamura (unrated) and was promoted from No. 8 to No. 7.

BANTAMWEIGHT: From his whooping wildman punches to his one-armed victory push-ups to his skull mask with aviator sunglasses, John Riel Casimero is a solid frontrunner for the most colorful 118-pounder, but the WBO titleholder's third-round stoppage of Duke Micah (unrated) wasn't enough to rise above the No. 3 position in the rankings.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT: Let's hope it's just by necessity and not a return to the days when Srisaket Sor Rungvisai (No. 1) feasted on a steady diet of human sacrifices, but the former pound-for-pounder stayed active with a second-round stoppage of Jomar Fajardo (17-17-2) in Thailand.

FLYWEIGHT: No. 5-rated Charlie Edwards moved up to bantamweight, so the bottom half of the list gained a level and No. 10 was claimed by 30-year-old Welshman Jay Harris.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C	**TYSON FURY** RING, WBC	U.K. • 30-0-1 (21 KOs)
1	**ANTHONY JOSHUA** IBF, WBA, WBO	U.K. • 23-1-0 (21 KOs)
2	**DEONTAY WILDER**	U.S. • 42-1-1 (41 KOs)
3	**ALEXANDER POVETKIN**	Russia • 36-2-1 (25 KOs)
4	**DILLIAN WHYTE**	U.K. • 27-2-0 (18 KOs)
5	**LUIS ORTIZ**	Cuba • 31-2-0 (26 KOs)
6	**ANDY RUIZ JR.**	U.S. • 33-2-0 (22 KOs)
7	**JOSEPH PARKER**	New Zealand • 27-2-0 (21 KOs)
8	**MICHAEL HUNTER**	U.S. • 18-1-1 (12 KOs)
9	**OSCAR RIVAS**	Colombia • 26-1-0 (18 KOs)
10	**KUBRAT PULEV**	Bulgaria • 28-1-0 (14 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 POUNDS

C	**MAIRIS BRIEDIS** RING, IBF	Latvia • 27-1-0 (19 KOs)
1	**YUNIEL DORTICOS**	Cuba • 24-2-0 (22 KOs)
2	**ILUNGA MAKABU** WBC	Congo • 27-2-0 (24 KOs)
3	**KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI**	Poland • 31-2-0 (19 KOs)
4	**KEVIN LERENA**	S. Africa • 25-1-0 (12 KOs)
5	**ANDREW TABITI**	U.S. • 17-1-0 (13 KOs)
6	**LAWRENCE OKOLIE**	U.K. • 14-0-0 (11 KOs)
7	**ARSEN GOULAMIRIAN** WBA	France • 26-0-0 (18 KOs)
8	**THABISO MCHUNU**	S. Africa • 22-5-0 (13 KOs)
9	**ALEKSEI PAPIN**	Russia • 12-1-0 (11 KOs)
10	**MICHAL CIESLAK**	Poland • 19-1-0 (13 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 POUNDS

C	**(VACANT)**	
1	**ARTUR BETERBIEV** IBF, WBC	Russia • 15-0-0 (15 KOs)
2	**DMITRY BIVOL** WBA	Russia • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)
3	**SERGEY KOVALEV**	Russia • 34-4-1 (29 KOs)
4	**JOE SMITH JR.**	U.S. • 26-3-0 (21 KOs)
5	**JEAN PASCAL**	Canada • 35-6-1 (20 KOs)
6	**BADOU JACK**	Sweden • 22-3-3 (13 KOs)
7	**ELEIDER ALVAREZ**	Colombia • 25-2-0 (13 KOs)
8	**MARCUS BROWNE**	U.S. • 23-1-0 (16 KOs)
9	**ANTHONY YARDE**	U.K. • 20-1-0 (19 KOs)
10	**UMAR SALAMOV**	Russia • 25-1-0 (19 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 POUNDS

C	**CALLUM SMITH** RING, WBA	U.K. • 27-0-0 (19 KOs)
1	**DAVID BENAVIDEZ**	U.S. • 23-0-0 (20 KOs)
2	**CALEB PLANT** IBF	U.S. • 20-0-0 (12 KOs)
3	**ANTHONY DIRRELL**	U.S. • 33-2-1 (24 KOs)
4	**CANELO ALVAREZ**	Mexico • 53-1-2 (36 KOs)
5	**BILLY JOE SAUNDERS** WBO	U.K. • 29-0-0 (14 KOs)
6	**CALEB TRUAX**	U.S. • 31-4-2 (19 KOs)
7	**JOHN RYDER**	U.K. • 28-5-0 (16 KOs)
8	**FEDOR CHUDINOV**	Russia • 23-2-0 (16 KOs)
9	**DAVID LEMIEUX**	Canada • 42-4-0 (35 KOs)
10	**DANIEL JACOBS**	U.S. • 36-3-0 (30 KOs)

RATINGS

Through fights of Oct. 10, 2020

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 POUNDS

- C **CANELO ALVAREZ** RING, WBA — Mexico • 53-1-2 (36 KOs)
- 1 **GENNADIY GOLOVKIN** IBF — Kaz. • 40-1-1 (35 KOs)
- 2 **JERMALL CHARLO** WBC — U.S. • 30-0-0 (22 KOs)
- 3 **DEMETRIUS ANDRADE** WBO — U.S. • 29-0-0 (18 KOs)
- 4 **SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO** — Ukraine • 13-2-0 (10 KOs)
- 5 **RYOTA MURATA** — Japan • 16-2-0 (13 KOs)
- 6 **KAMIL SZEREMETA** — Poland • 21-0-0 (5 KOs)
- 7 **CHRIS EUBANK JR.** — U.K. • 29-2-0 (22 KOs)
- 8 **ROB BRANT** — U.S. • 26-2-0 (18 KOs)
- 9 **LIAM WILLIAMS** — U.K. • 23-2-1 (18 KOs)
- 10 **ZHANIBEK ALIMKHANULY** — Kazakhstan • 9-0-0 (5 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 POUNDS

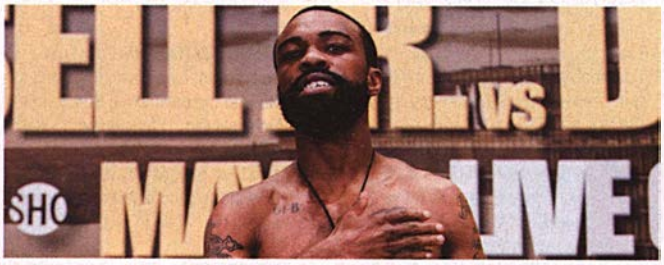
- C **JERMELL CHARLO** WBC, IBF, WBA — U.S. • 33-1-0 (17 KOs)
- 1 **JARRETT HURD** — U.S. • 24-1-0 (16 KOs)
- 2 **ERISLANDY LARA** — Cuba • 27-3-3 (15 KOs)
- 3 **JEISON ROSARIO** — Dom. Rep. • 20-2-1 (14 KOs)
- 4 **JULIAN WILLIAMS** — U.S. • 27-2-1 (16 KOs)
- 5 **BRIAN CASTANO** — Argentina • 16-0-1 (12 KOs)
- 6 **TONY HARRISON** — U.S. • 28-3-0 (21 KOs)
- 7 **ERICKSON LUBIN** — U.S. • 23-1-0 (16 KOs)
- 8 **MICHEL SORO** — France • 35-2-1 (24 KOs)
- 9 **PATRICK TEIXEIRA** WBO — Brazil • 31-1-0 (22 KOs)
- 10 **TIM TSZYU** — Australia • 16-0-0 (12 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 POUNDS

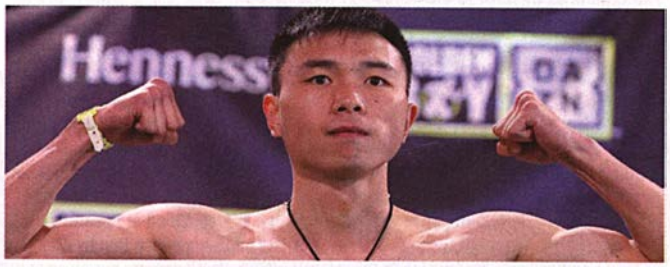
- C (VACANT)
- 1 **ERROL SPENCE JR.** IBF, WBC — U.S. • 26-0-0 (21 KOs)
- 2 **TERENCE CRAWFORD** WBO — U.S. • 36-0-0 (27 KOs)
- 3 **MANNY PACQUIAO** WBA — Phil. • 62-7-2 (39 KOs)
- 4 **KEITH THURMAN** — U.S. • 29-1-0 (22 KOs)
- 5 **SHAWN PORTER** — U.S. • 31-3-1 (17 KOs)
- 6 **DANNY GARCIA** — U.S. • 36-2-0 (21 KOs)
- 7 **YORDENIS UGAS** — Cuba • 26-4-0 (12 KOs)
- 8 **KUDRATILLO ABDUKAKHOROV** — Uzbekistan • 17-0-0 (9 KOs)
- 9 **SERGEY LIPINETS** — Russia • 16-1-0 (12 KOs)
- 10 **MIKEY GARCIA** — U.S. • 40-1-0 (30 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 POUNDS

- C **JOSH TAYLOR** RING, IBF, WBA — U.K. • 17-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 1 **JOSE RAMIREZ** WBC, WBO — U.S. • 26-0-0 (17 KOs)
- 2 **REGIS PROGRAIS** — U.S. • 24-1-0 (20 KOs)
- 3 **JOSE ZEPEDA** — U.S. • 33-2-0 (26 KOs)
- 4 **VIKTOR POSTOL** — Ukraine • 31-3-0 (12 KOs)
- 5 **IVAN BARANCHYK** — Russia • 20-2-0 (13 KOs)
- 6 **KIRYL RELIKH** — Belarus • 23-3-0 (19 KOs)
- 7 **MARIO BARRIOS** — U.S. • 25-0-0 (16 KOs)
- 8 **ARNOLD BARBOZA** — U.S. • 24-0-0 (10 KOs)
- 9 **BATYRZHAN JUKEMBAYEV** — Kazakhstan • 18-0-0 (14 KOs)
- 10 **SHOHJAHON ERGASHEV** — Uzbekistan • 18-0-0 (16 KOs)



Gary Russell Jr. still holds the No. 2 position at featherweight but has aspirations to move as high as lightweight. No opponent has been confirmed for that move yet.



No. 3-rated featherweight Xu Can has been linked to a potential matchup against No. 1-rated Josh Warrington. Fans await a date and location for what could become a Fight of the Year candidate.

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 POUNDS

- C **VASILIY LOMACHENKO** RING, WBA, WBO — Ukraine • 14-1-0 (10 KOs)
- 1 **TEOFIMO LOPEZ** IBF — U.S. • 15-0-0 (12 KOs)
- 2 **DEVIN HANEY** WBC — U.S. • 24-0-0 (15 KOs)
- 3 **RICHARD COMMEY** — Ghana • 29-3-0 (26 KOs)
- 4 **LUKE CAMPBELL** — U.K. • 20-3-0 (16 KOs)
- 5 **RYAN GARCIA** — U.S. • 20-0-0 (17 KOs)
- 6 **ROBERT EASTER** — U.S. • 22-1-1 (14 KOs)
- 7 **JAVIER FORTUNA** — Dom. Rep. • 35-2-1 (24 KOs)
- 8 **JORGE LINARES** — Venezuela • 47-5-0 (29 KOs)
- 9 **EMMANUEL TAGOE** — Ghana • 31-1-0 (15 KOs)
- 10 **RANCES BARTHELEMY** — Cuba • 27-1-1 (14 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 POUNDS

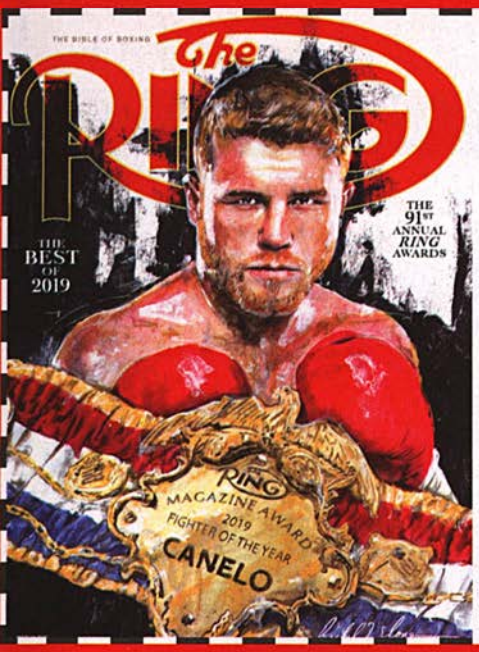
- C (VACANT)
- 1 **MIGUEL BERCHELT** WBC — Mexico • 37-1-0 (33 KOs)
- 2 **JOSEPH DIAZ JR.** IBF — U.S. • 31-1-0 (15 KOs)
- 3 **JAMEL HERRING** WBO — U.S. • 22-2-0 (10 KOs)
- 4 **TEVIN FARMER** — U.S. • 30-5-1 (6 KOs)
- 5 **RENE ALVARADO** — Nicaragua • 32-8-0 (21 KOs)
- 6 **MASAYUKI ITO** — Japan • 26-2-1 (14 KOs)
- 7 **ANDREW CANCIO** — U.S. • 21-5-2 (16 KOs)
- 8 **MIGUEL ROMAN** — Mexico • 62-13-0 (47 KOs)
- 9 **SHAVKATDZHON RAKHIMOV** — Russia • 15-0-0 (12 KOs)
- 10 **CHRIS COLBERT** — U.S. • 14-0-0 (5 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)
- 1 **JOSH WARRINGTON** IBF — U.K. • 30-0-0 (7 KOs)
- 2 **GARY RUSSELL JR.** WBC — U.S. • 31-1-0 (18 KOs)
- 3 **XU CAN** WBA — China • 18-2-0 (3 KOs)
- 4 **KID GALAHAD** — U.K. • 27-1-0 (16 KOs)
- 5 **EMANUEL NAVARRETE** WBO — Mexico • 32-1-0 (27 KOs)
- 6 **MARK MAGSAYO** — Phil. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)
- 7 **TUGSTSOGT NYAMBAYAR** — Mongolia • 12-1-0 (9 KOs)
- 8 **JESSIE MAGDALENO** — U.S. • 28-1-0 (18 KOs)
- 9 **JOET GONZALEZ** — U.S. • 24-1-0 (14 KOs)
- 10 **RUBEN VILLA** — U.S. • 18-1-0 (5 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)
- 1 **REY VARGAS** — Mexico • 34-0-0 (22 KOs)
- 2 **MURODJON AKHMADALIEV** IBF, WBA — Uzbekistan • 8-0-0 (6 KOs)
- 3 **DANIEL ROMAN** — U.S. • 28-3-1 (10 KOs)
- 4 **RYOSUKE IWASA** — Japan • 27-3-0 (17 KOs)
- 5 **BRANDON FIGUEROA** — U.S. • 20-0-1 (15 KOs)
- 6 **ANGELO LEO** WBO — U.S. • 20-0-0 (9 KOs)
- 7 **HIROAKI TESHIGAWARA** — Japan • 22-2-2 (15 KOs)
- 8 **TOMOKI KAMEDA** — Japan • 36-3-0 (20 KOs)
- 9 **AZAT HOVHANNISYAN** — Armenia • 18-3-0 (15 KOs)
- 10 **STEPHEN FULTON** — U.S. • 18-0-0 (8 KOs)



GET 6 ISSUES FOR $24.99

3 ISSUES FREE

SPECIAL DISCOUNT
PROMO CODE: 6301NC

NAME

ADDRESS / APT

CITY / STATE / ZIP

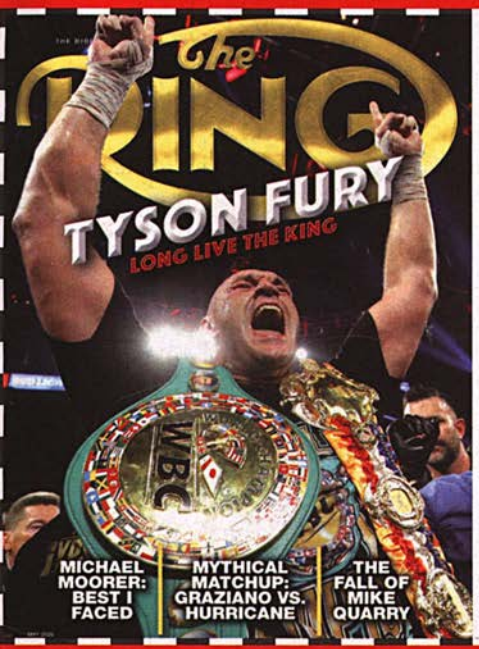
EMAIL TELEPHONE

PAYMENT METHOD: ☐CHECK / MONEY ORDER ☐VISA ☐MASTERCARD ☐AMEX

CARD # / EXP. DATE 3 OR 4 DIGIT SECURITY CODE SIGNATURE

MAIL TO: SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT PUBLICATIONS LLC, P.O. BOX 433122, PALM COAST, FL 32164-3122
OR CALL: 1.800.846.6438 **OR EMAIL:** thering@emailcustomerservice.com

*FOR CANADA AND MEXICO: $29.99 FOR 6 ISSUES; $49.99 FOR ONE YEAR; $79.99 FOR TWO YEARS. ALL OTHER COUNTRIES: $34.99 FOR 6 ISSUES; $59.99 FOR ONE YEAR; $99.99 FOR TWO YEARS. INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS ONLY IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY. AIRMAIL SHIPPING ONLY OUTSIDE THE U.S. PLEASE ALLOW UP TO EIGHT WEEKS BEFORE YOU RECEIVE YOUR FIRST MAGAZINE. OFFER EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 20120



GET 12 ISSUES FOR $39.99

7 ISSUES FREE

SPECIAL DISCOUNT
PROMO CODE: 6301NC

NAME

ADDRESS / APT

CITY / STATE / ZIP

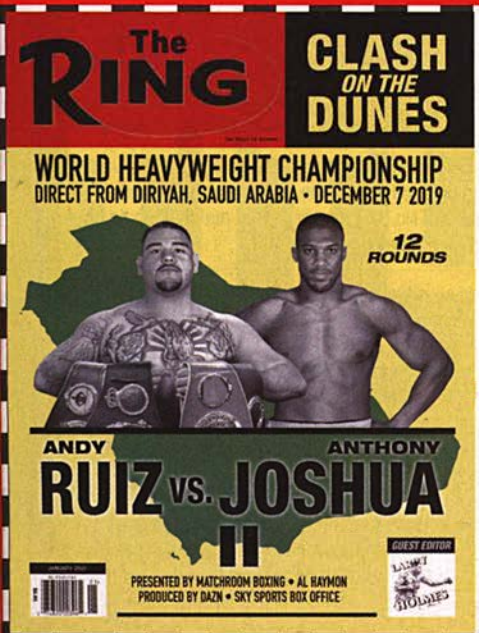
EMAIL TELEPHONE

PAYMENT METHOD: ☐CHECK / MONEY ORDER ☐VISA ☐MASTERCARD ☐AMEX

CARD # / EXP. DATE 3 OR 4 DIGIT SECURITY CODE SIGNATURE

MAIL TO: SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT PUBLICATIONS LLC, P.O. BOX 433122, PALM COAST, FL 32164-3122
OR CALL: 1.800.846.6438 **OR EMAIL:** thering@emailcustomerservice.com

*FOR CANADA AND MEXICO: $29.99 FOR 6 ISSUES; $49.99 FOR ONE YEAR; $79.99 FOR TWO YEARS. ALL OTHER COUNTRIES: $34.99 FOR 6 ISSUES; $59.99 FOR ONE YEAR; $99.99 FOR TWO YEARS. INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS ONLY IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY. AIRMAIL SHIPPING ONLY OUTSIDE THE U.S. PLEASE ALLOW UP TO EIGHT WEEKS BEFORE YOU RECEIVE YOUR FIRST MAGAZINE. OFFER EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2020



GET 24 ISSUES FOR $64.99

16 ISSUES FREE

SPECIAL DISCOUNT
PROMO CODE: 6301NC

NAME

ADDRESS / APT

CITY / STATE / ZIP

EMAIL TELEPHONE

PAYMENT METHOD: ☐CHECK / MONEY ORDER ☐VISA ☐MASTERCARD ☐AMEX

CARD # / EXP. DATE 3 OR 4 DIGIT SECURITY CODE SIGNATURE

MAIL TO: SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT PUBLICATIONS LLC, P.O. BOX 433122, PALM COAST, FL 32164-3122
OR CALL: 1.800.846.6438 **OR EMAIL:** thering@emailcustomerservice.com

*FOR CANADA AND MEXICO: $29.99 FOR 6 ISSUES; $49.99 FOR ONE YEAR; $79.99 FOR TWO YEARS. ALL OTHER COUNTRIES: $34.99 FOR 6 ISSUES; $59.99 FOR ONE YEAR; $99.99 FOR TWO YEARS. INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS ONLY IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY. AIRMAIL SHIPPING ONLY OUTSIDE THE U.S. PLEASE ALLOW UP TO EIGHT WEEKS BEFORE YOU RECEIVE YOUR FIRST MAGAZINE. OFFER EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2020

RATINGS

Through fights of Oct. 10, 2020

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 POUNDS

- **C** **NAOYA INOUE** RING, IBF, WBA
  Japan • 19-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **1** **NONITO DONAIRE**
  Phil. • 40-6-0 (26 KOs)
- **2** **NORDINE OUBAALI** WBC
  France • 17-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **3** **JOHN RIEL CASIMERO** WBO
  Philippines • 20-4–0 (21 KOs)
- **4** **EMMANUEL RODRIGUEZ**
  P.R. • 19-1-0 (12 KOs)
- **5** **JASON MOLONEY**
  Australia • 21-1-0 (18 KOs)
- **6** **ZOLANI TETE**
  S. Africa • 28-4-0 (21 KOs)
- **7** **TAKUMA INOUE**
  Japan • 13-1-0 (3 KOs)
- **8** **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
  Cuba • 20-1-0 (13 KOs)
- **9** **OSCAR NEGRETE**
  U.S. • 19-2-2 (7 KOs)
- **10** **MIKE PLANIA**
  Philippines • 24-1–0 (12 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 POUNDS

- **C** **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA** RING, WBC
  Mexico • 40-3-0 (27 KOs)
- **1** **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
  Thailand • 49-5-1 (42 KOs)
- **2** **ROMAN GONZALEZ** WBA
  Nicaragua • 49-2-0 (41 KOs)
- **3** **KAZUTO IOKA** WBO
  Japan • 25-2-0 (14 KOs)
- **4** **JERWIN ANCAJAS** IBF
  Phil. • 32-1-2 (22 KOs)
- **5** **KHALID YAFAI**
  U.K. • 26-1-0 (15 KOs)
- **6** **JOSHUA FRANCO**
  U.S. • 17-1-2 (8 KOs)
- **7** **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ JR.**
  Mexico • 33-4-1 (24 KOs)
- **8** **ANDREW MOLONEY**
  Australia • 21-1-0 (14 KOs)
- **9** **JEYVIER CINTRON**
  P.R. • 11-1-0 (5 KOs)
- **10** **CARLOS CUADRAS**
  Mexico • 39-3-1 (27 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 POUNDS

- **C** **(VACANT)**
- **1** **KOSEI TANAKA**
  Japan • 15-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **2** **MORUTI MTHALANE** IBF
  S. Africa • 39-2-0 (26 KOs)
- **3** **JULIO CESAR MARTINEZ** WBC
  Mexico • 16-1-0 (12 KOs)
- **4** **ARTEM DALAKIAN** WBA
  Ukraine • 20-0-0 (14 KOs)
- **5** **ANDREW SELBY**
  U.K. • 13-1-0 (7 KOs)
- **6** **MASAYUKI KURODA**
  Japan • 30-8-3 (16 KOs)
- **7** **JUNTO NAKATANI**
  Japan • 20-0-0 (15 KOs)
- **8** **CRISTOFER ROSALES**
  Nicaragua • 31-5-0 (21 KOs)
- **9** **GIEMEL MAGRAMO**
  Phil. • 24-1-0 (20 KOs)
- **10** **CHARLIE EDWARDS**
  U.K. • 15-1-0 (6 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 POUNDS

- **C** **HIROTO KYOGUCHI** RING, WBA
  Japan • 14-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **1** **KENSHIRO TERAJI** WBC
  Japan • 17-0-0 (10 KOs)
- **2** **HEKKIE BUDLER**
  S. Africa • 32-4-0 (10 KOs)
- **3** **CARLOS CANIZALES**
  Venezuela • 22-0-1 (17 KOs)
- **4** **FELIX ALVARADO** IBF
  Nicaragua • 35-2-0 (30 KOs)
- **5** **ELWIN SOTO** WBO
  Mexico • 17-1-0 (12 KOs)
- **6** **TETSUYA HISADA**
  Japan • 34-10-2 (20 KOs)
- **7** **EDWARD HENO**
  Phil. • 14-1-5 (5 KOs)
- **8** **SHO KIMURA**
  Japan • 19-3-2 (12 KOs)
- **9** **DANIEL MATELLON**
  Cuba • 11-0-2 (6 KOs)
- **10** **AGUSTIN GAUTO**
  Argentina • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 POUNDS

- **C** **(VACANT)**
- **1** **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN** WBC
  Thailand • 54-0-0 (18 KOs)
- **2** **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART** WBA
  Thailand • 21-0-0 (7 KOs)
- **3** **WILFREDO MENDEZ** WBO
  Puerto Rico • 16-1-0 (6 KOs)
- **4** **BYRON ROJAS**
  Nicaragua • 27-4-3 (11 KOs)
- **5** **VIC SALUDAR**
  Phil. • 20-4-0 (11 KOs)
- **6** **JOSE ARGUMEDO**
  Mexico • 23-4-1 (14 KOs)
- **7** **SIMPIWE KONKCO**
  S. Africa • 19-6-0 (7 KOs)
- **8** **PEDRO TADURAN** IBF
  Phil. • 14-2-1 (11 KOs)
- **9** **MELVIN JERUSALEM**
  Phil. • 15-2-0 (9 KOs
- **10** **NKOSINATHI JOYI** P. Africa •
  29-5-1 (19 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND
SUMMARY

- **1** **CANELO ALVAREZ**
  Mexico • 53-1-2 (36 KOs)
- **2** **VASILIY LOMACHENKO**
  Ukraine • 14-1-0 (10 KOs)
- **3** **NAOYA INOUE**
  Japan • 19-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **4** **TERENCE CRAWFORD**
  U.S. • 36-0-0 (27 KOs)
- **5** **ALEKSANDR USYK**
  Ukraine • 17-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **6** **ERROL SPENCE JR.**
  U.S. • 26-0-0 (21 KOs)
- **7** **GENNADIY GOLOVKIN**
  Kazakhstan • 40-1-1 (35 KOs)
- **8** **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
  Mexico • 40-3-0 (27 KOs)
- **9** **ARTUR BETERBIEV**
  Russia • 15-0-0 (15 KOs)
- **10** **MANNY PACQUIAO**
  Philippines • 62-7-2 (39 KOs)

Jermell Charlo's victory over Jeison Rosario put him in the conversation of being among the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world.

POUND FOR POUND: The motion was put forward by one member of the Ratings Panel to award the No. 9 spot to Jermell Charlo. Charlo's level of opposition and the unquestionable nature of his title-winning performances (all KOs) should override the resume of the incumbent Artur Beterbiev, said the panelist. The pushback to that idea wasn't so much a criticism of Charlo as it was an issue of past snubs: "If Josh Taylor didn't hit the Top 10 pound-for-pound, then I can't justify Jermell coming in," said an opposing panelist. "Taylor remains undefeated, looks superior, he's equally decorated, and I'll upsell Regis Prograis (whom Taylor defeated in the WBSS final, also winning the Ring championship) over Jeison Rosario on any day ending in Y."

Charlo's advocate again focused on results: "The one difference between Charlo and Taylor in my mind is that there was no debate in his title-winning victories. I thought Taylor beat Prograis, but certainly not everyone did. He was a small step above. No debate with Charlo's wins to get titles."

The panelists then dug into the resumes of Rosario and Prograis to find evidence of superior quality, with Julian Williams and Kiryl Relikh's names thrown into the mix, but support for Taylor won out. And so from Charlo to Taylor to Relikh and back again, it all added up to a "no" for Jermell. "Personally, I don't even think Jermell is the best twin," said another panelist.

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED
RECORDS PROVIDED BY BOXREC.COM

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. The Ring's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the Ring title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

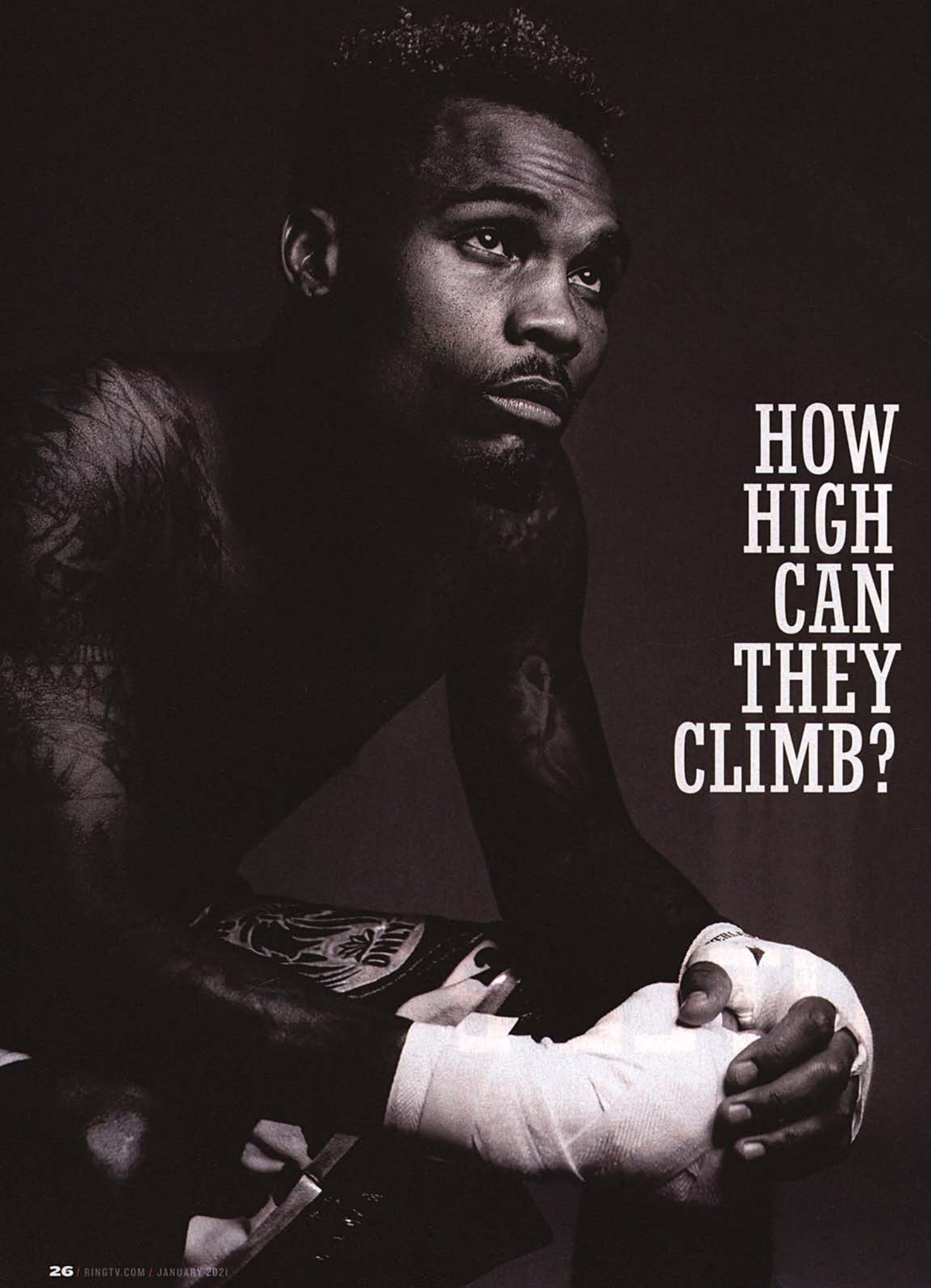
The Ring Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

TITLE BOXING

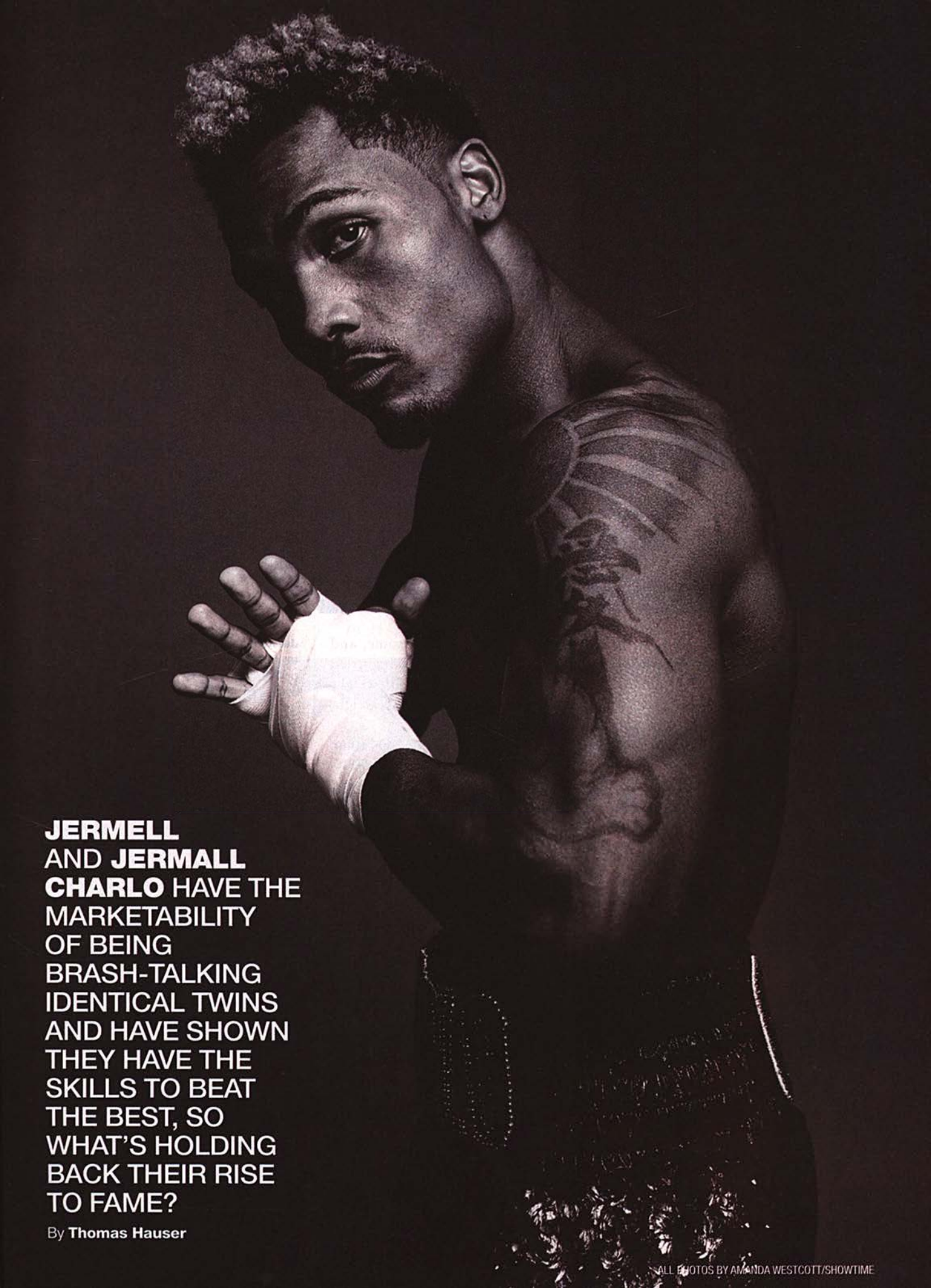
GEAR FOR EVERY GENERATION OF CHAMPIONS

@titleboxing /titleboxing /titleboxing @titleboxing

TITLEBOXING.COM



HOW HIGH CAN THEY CLIMB?



JERMELL AND **JERMALL CHARLO** HAVE THE MARKETABILITY OF BEING BRASH-TALKING IDENTICAL TWINS AND HAVE SHOWN THEY HAVE THE SKILLS TO BEAT THE BEST, SO WHAT'S HOLDING BACK THEIR RISE TO FAME?

By **Thomas Hauser**

ALL PHOTOS BY AMANDA WESTCOTT/SHOWTIME

Jermell added Ring Magazine, IBF and WBA 154-pound titles to his collection with a knockout of the hard-hitting Rosario.

Jermell and Jermall Charlo, identical twins, turned pro respectively in 2007 and 2008. Now 30 years old, they've compiled a 65-1 (40 KOs) ring record between them. But they haven't gone in as tough as boxing fans would have liked and they haven't become stars. A September 26 doubleheader on Showtime PPV was designed to chip away at these issues and launch them into a higher orbit.

A fighter doesn't need cruelty to be great. Cruelty implies deriving joy from another person's pain. Many fighters disassociate themselves from the pain they cause. That's typical of sports. When a baseball player hits a home run, he doesn't empathize with the pitcher's pain. So cruelty isn't necessary. But it helps for a fighter to have a wellspring of anger to motivate him. And the Charlos have that.

Jermall came into the September 26 fight card with an unblemished 30-0 (22 KOs) ring record and a World Boxing Council 160-pound belt around his waist. But he lacked a signature win on his resume, and Canelo Alvarez is widely regarded as both the real WBC middleweight champion and the best middleweight in the world.

Jermell Charlo (33-1, 17 KOs going in) had previously held the WBC 154-pound title, lost it by decision to Tony Harrison in 2018 and regained it by knocking out Harrison in December 2019.

"Twin power is better," Jermall has said. "If you don't like the Charlos, stay out of our lane and keep the hate down."

The fights on September 26 were contested at Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Connecticut, without spectators on site. Showtime styled the promotion as a two-part, six-fight pay-per-view doubleheader and charged $74.95 for the show. The fact that the event was on pay-per-view didn't speak to the Charlos' marketability. Rather, it signaled that no sponsor would put up enough money for the fight to be televised on Fox, nor would Showtime pay a license fee large enough to cover the fighters' purses.

The first half of the doubleheader was headlined by Jermall Charlo vs. Sergiy Derevyanchenko with Brandon Figueroa vs. Damien Vazquez and John Riel Casimero vs. Duke Micah on the undercard. Part two featured Jermell Charlo vs Jeison Rosario for the WBC, WBA, IBF and vacant Ring Magazine 154-pound titles preceded by Luis Nery vs. Aaron Alameda and Danny Roman vs. Juan Carlos Payano.

The two Charlo fights were the bouts that mattered most.

"I see people grumbling they aren't pay-per-view fighters," Showtime Sports president Stephen Espinoza said. "But no one is a pay-per-view fighter until they get put in a pay-per-view fight."

Still, there were questions as to how the numbers would add up. Derevyanchenko was guaranteed a purse in the neighborhood of $2.2 million. That was less than the $3 million he'd been offered by

DAZN to fight Canelo Alvarez on the streaming network. But DAZN was then unable to get on the same page with Golden Boy Promotions and Canelo to close a deal for that fight. Meanwhile, Rosario would be well-compensated by Showtime and Premier Boxing Champions (which represents the Charlos) for bringing his IBF and WBA belts to the table. That meant the Charlos would be fighting for modest guarantees and hoping for a profitable upside on pay-per-view buys.

"This one is more a roll of the dice than usual," Espinoza acknowledged.

Derevyanchenko (13-3, 10 KOs before the fight) was a step up in the quality of opposition for Jermall. Sergiy grew up in Ukraine and has lived in Brooklyn since 2014. He's a tough out and had come up short in losses by decision to Danny Jacobs and Gennadiy Golovkin in fights that could have gone either way on the judges' scorecards.

"The green color of the WBC belt suits me," Derevyanchenko said at the final pre-fight press conference for the Charlo doubleheader. "I want that green belt. I've fought twice for the title and I'm more ready than ever for the third time."

That said, Sergiy was 34 years old with the wear and tear of 400 amateur bouts and 15 pro fights on his body. Jermall was a 2-to-1 favorite.

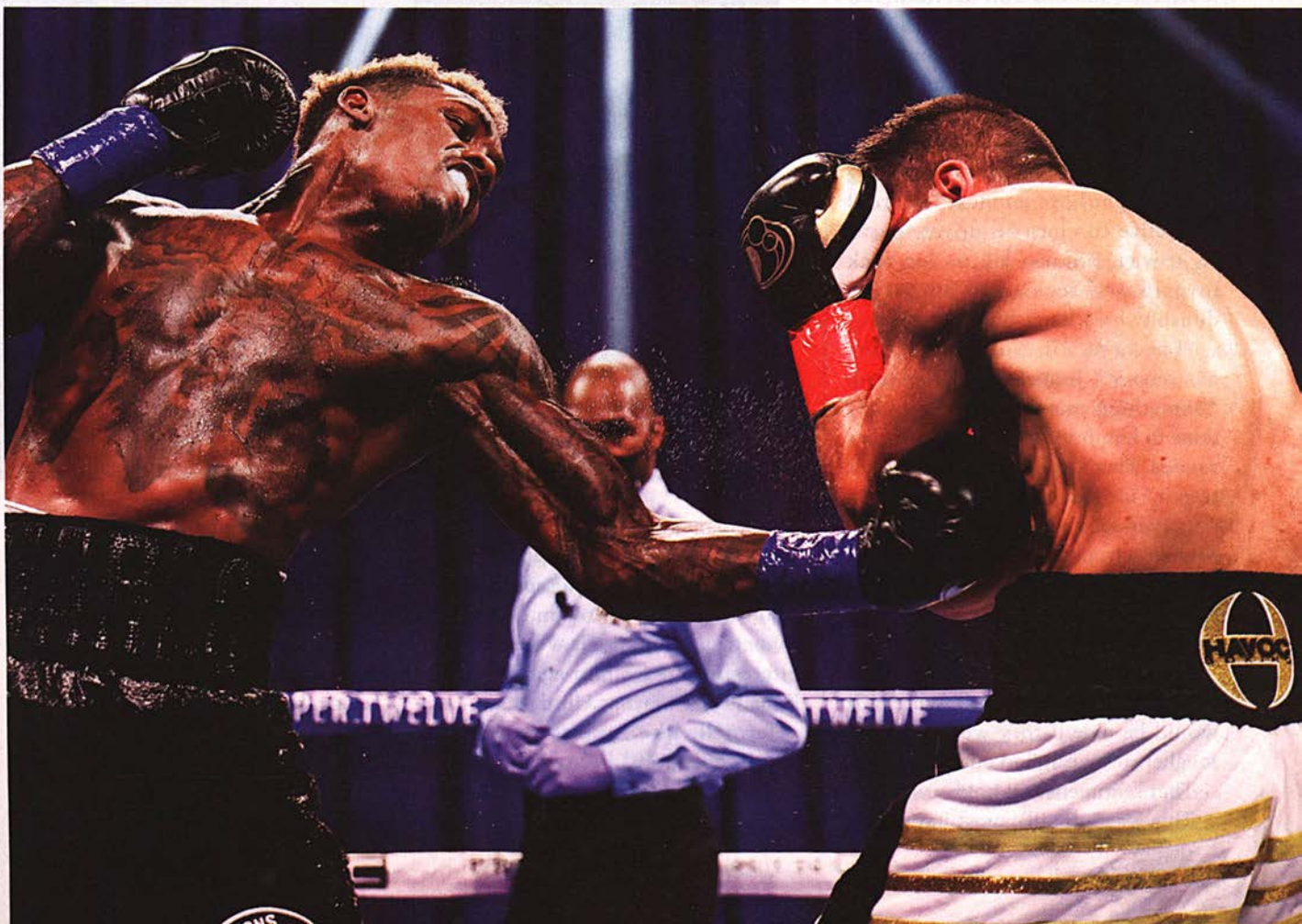
Rosario (20-2-1, 14 KOs going in) had scored a surprise knockout of Julian Williams as a 30-to-1 underdog in January to claim his pair of belts. Speaking through a translator at the final pre-fight press conference for the Charlo fight, Jeison declared, "People are going to see on Saturday that it was no fluke that I beat Julian Williams the way that I did. There's no room in my mind for the possibility of not winning."

In response, Jermell, a 4-to-1 favorite, proclaimed, "During the fight, you're going to find out who really is the hunter. I'm a warrior, and we're going to see that night who really is the hunter and who is the one that's going to be hunted."

The clear consensus going in was that it wouldn't be easy for either Charlo but that Jermall and Jermell would both win.

Charlo-Derevyanchenko was a spirited action fight with Charlo in control for most of the bout. Sergiy kept trying to pressure Jermall but was rarely able to land effectively. Charlo fought a disciplined fight, relied heavily on a good jab and landed the more telling blows. He was more skilled and also more athletically gifted than Derevyanchenko. A succession of jabs opened a cut on Sergiy's right eyelid in Round 5. A more dangerous cut on Sergiy's left eyelid that was partially obscured by swelling followed. The decision of the judges was 118-110, 117-111, 116-112 in Jermall's favor.

"Sort of, it was easy," Charlo said



Jermall successfully defended his 160-pound title with a unanimous decision win over the rampaging Sergiy Derevyanchenko.

afterward. "I don't wanna call him like an easy fight. No fight is easy. It's always a hard fight. At any given time, anything can change. But we stuck to the game plan and we made it happen. I let my jab dictate and do what it do, and we got the victory. I wanted to knock him out, if that's what you wanna know. I wanted to knock him out, but you can't knock out every fighter. I landed the shots that I needed to land to win."

Meanwhile, the defeat was a bitter disappointment for Derevyanchenko, who cried in his dressing room after the bout. "I'm sick of fighting a good fight and losing," he told those who were gathered around him. "I want to win a title."

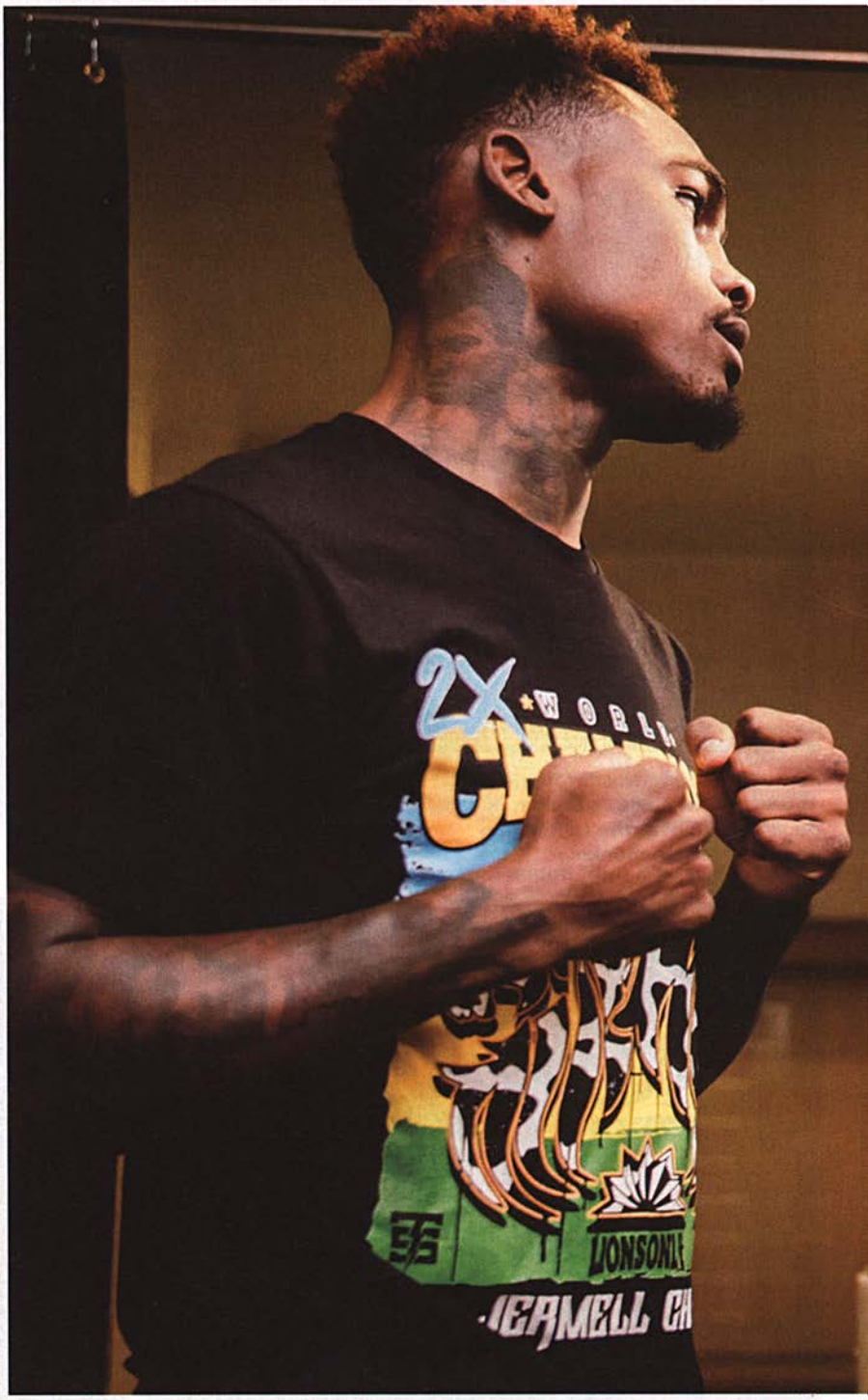
Later that night, seven stitches were etched into Derevyanchenko's skin to close the cut on his left eyelid. On Sunday, the cut was reopened by a plastic surgeon who restitched it.

Jermell Charlo vs. Jeison Rosario was the second featured fight of the night. Rosario won four of seven rounds on two of the judges' scorecards and three on the third. But from beginning to end, it had the feel of being Jermell's fight. He knocked Rosario down in the first and sixth rounds before ending matters on a strange note in Round 8 with a jab to the beltline that, because of its landing angle, might have jammed Rosario's protective cup into his private parts. As it was, Rosario lay on his back in pain and seemed to be having difficulty breathing.

"I never seen it. Nobody in boxing has seen it," Jermell said afterward. "Something must've been seriously done to him prior to that in the earlier rounds. That's it. I don't know. I never seen it." He later added, "I mean, have you ever seen somebody with a jab to the body, put him out? Man, that's different. I hit him right in the right spot, took the air out of him. I don't know what happened, man."

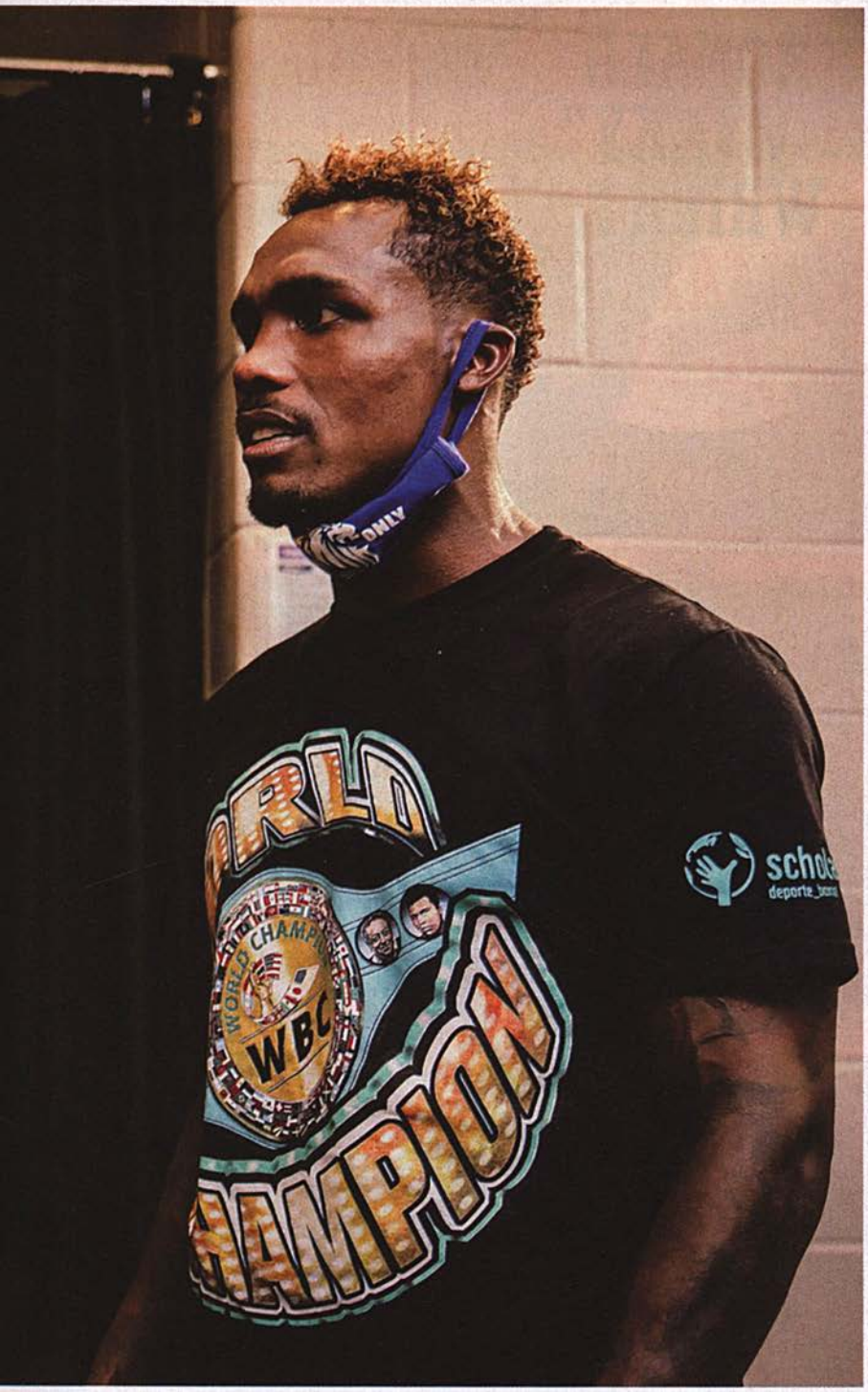
Three years ago, I wrote, "The Charlo brothers are good fighters. It would be nice if they were matched tougher so we can find out how good."

That sentiment still holds true.



This was Jermall's most impressive performance to date, a solid victory against a world-class opponent. It would be interesting to see him next against Alvarez, Golovkin, Jacobs or Demetrius Andrade. It would be less interesting to see him against Chris Eubank Jr. or Jarrett Hurd.

Jermell, like his brother, has a good chin, good boxing skills and world-class athletic gifts. He also has three of the four major sanctioning organization belts at 154 pounds and a legitimate claim to being the No. 1 junior middleweight in the world. But like Jermall, he needs better opposition – not belts – to take him to the next level. That could come from above if he moves up to 160 pounds. Or it could come from below, for example if Errol Spence were to beat Danny Garcia and then move up to challenge Jermell.



The Charlos possess speed, power, talent and bags of personality, but will those attributes lead them to superstardom?

At the post-fight press conference following his victory over Rosario, Jermell declared, "I hope that we proved all of these haters wrong tonight. I seen a whole lotta yak on that Instagram and on them Twitters and all of them pages and all of that media . . . They don't understand the skills and the levels of boxing, and that's what we present."

That was followed by the declaration, "We here for it. We here to stay. Everybody in boxing – the Charlo twins are taking the fuck over!"

That was consistent with Jermall's earlier boast to Ray Flores, "I'm running the show [at middleweight]. I'm driving the boat."

But while the Charlos will be formidable opponents for anyone they fight, neither has moved the needle in a significant way in terms of marketability. Most sports fans have no idea who they are. Many casual boxing fans don't know which Charlo is which. Tickets for their past fights have not sold well.

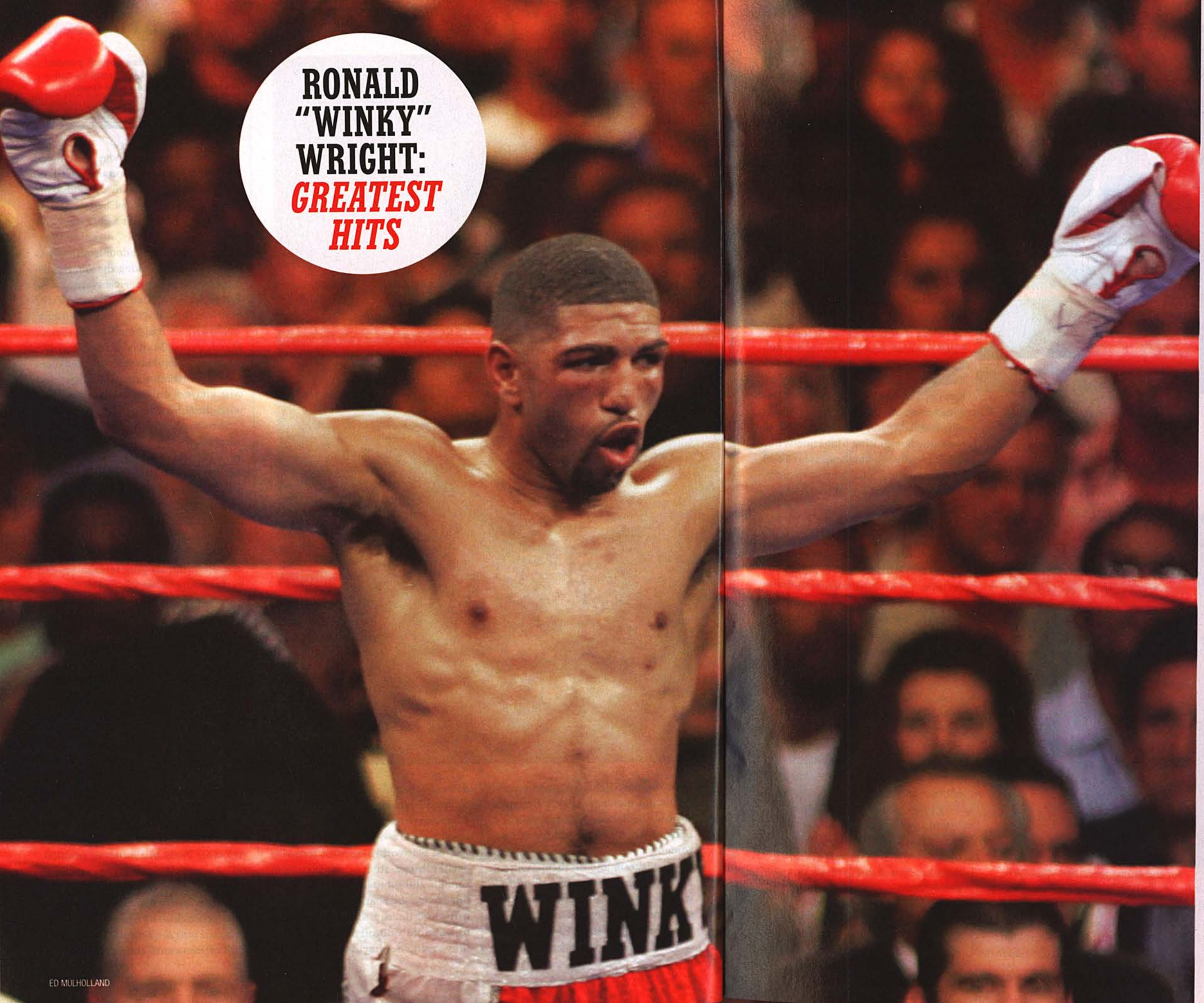
The September 26 doubleheader was a test drive for making the Charlos an ongoing dual pay-per-view attraction. But it was televised within hours of fight cards on ESPN+ (Josh Taylor vs. Apinun Khongsong) and DAZN (Yuniel Dorticos vs. Mairis Briedis). These earlier cards left fans who watched them with a measure of viewing fatigue and cost viewers only a small fraction of what the Showtime pay-per-view cost.

Showtime has not released PPV numbers for the Charlo doubleheader as of this writing and might never do so. But indications are that it drew poorly. The network has been plagued by poor ratings since its return to boxing following its shutdown for the pandemic. One week prior to the Charlo card, a Showtime Championship Boxing telecast headed by Erickson Lubin vs. Terrell Gausha averaged a meager 122,000 viewers. Had the Charlo doubleheader been on "regular" Showtime, it likely would have generated a substantial rating. But economic considerations forced it to pay-per-view.

Thus the centuries-old philosophical question: If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound? RING

Thomas Hauser's email address is thomashauserwriter@gmail.com. His most recent book – Staredown: Another Year Inside Boxing – was published by the University of Arkansas Press this autumn. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism. He will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame with the Class of 2020.

RONALD "WINKY" WRIGHT: *GREATEST HITS*



ED MULHOLLAND

WINKY WRIGHT HAD TO TAKE THE HARD ROAD TO SUCCESS, BUT HE PROVED TO BE AMONG THE BEST CHAMPIONS OF THE 2000S

By **Anson Wainwright**

Ronald Wright was as tough as he was talented. And though overlooked and underrated for the first 10 years of his pro career, he proved to be one of the best defensive fighters of his era as the undisputed junior middleweight champion and a pound-for-pound-rated middleweight during the mid-2000s.

Wright was born in Washington, D.C., on November 26, 1971. When he was 18 months old, his grandmother dubbed him "Winky" and the name stuck.

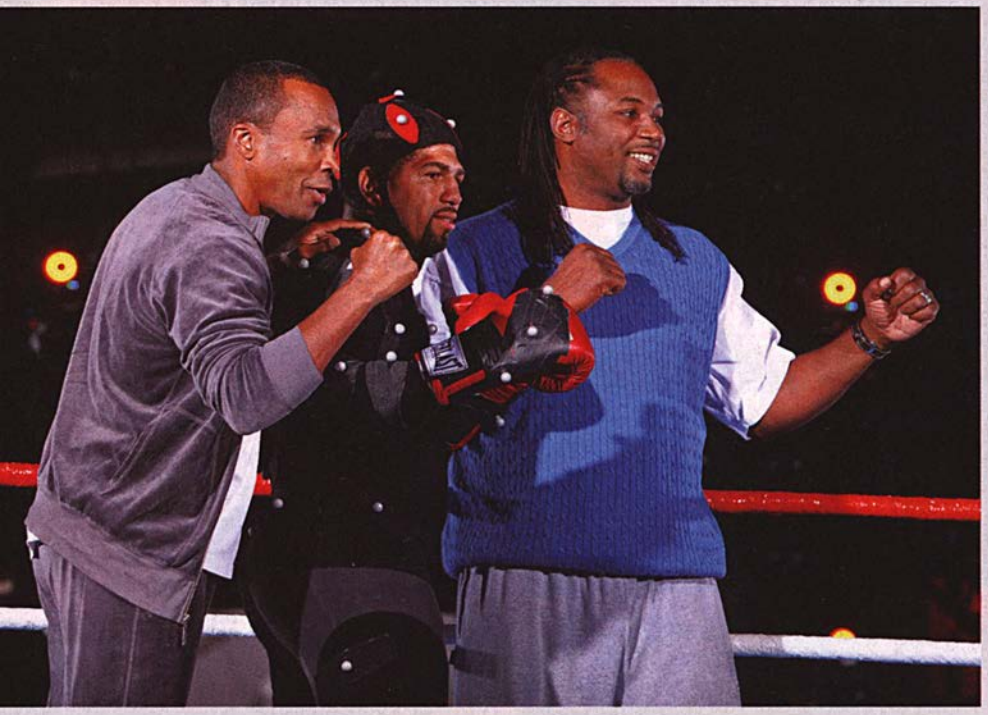
"We were middle class and everything was cool," Wright told The Ring. "I had a great childhood. I wasn't one of them kids that had a tough childhood and had to get into boxing.

"I moved to Florida to live with my grandparents two months before I turned 16. I always wanted to box when I was in D.C., but I never did. I always played football, basketball and baseball. I was an inner-city kid. I was always playing them. I loved watching Sugar Ray Leonard; he was my idol."

A friend from school introduced him to the fight game at a boxing club.

"I went over there and checked it out," he said. "I trained for two, maybe three weeks and I won the Golden Gloves. I was like, 'This is fun.' I just kept training every day. I started boxing when I was 16. I turned pro when I was 18."

Wright compiled a 52-4 record during his brief but successful amateur career. He won several regional titles and had hopes of going to the Goodwill Games in 1990 but was told he lacked the requisite experience. He decided to turn



Wright, here flanked by Sugar Ray Leonard (left) and Lennox Lewis, ultimately found his place among other champions.

professional in the fall of 1990.

Over the first two years of his career, Wright streaked to 16-0. However, he was unable to catch the eye of the big-name American promoters and instead signed with powerful French promoters of the day.

"I had a deal with the Acaries brothers," he explained. "They were giving me good fights over in Europe and paying me more than I was getting in the U.S. and I was seeing myself move up the rankings, so it was a win-win situation for me."

Wright eventually became the mandatory challenger for WBA 154-pound titleholder Julio Cesar Vasquez and faced the rugged Argentine in France in August 1994. Wright hung tough with Vasquez (50-1 at the time) for 12 competitive rounds but suffered five knockdowns (some of which he disputes as "slips") and was handed his first loss by unanimous decision.

He rebounded, collecting the NABF title en route to a second world title opportunity against Bronco McKart. This time, Wright edged the scorecards to win the WBO belt via split decision in May 1996.

Wright legitimately could have expected bigger opportunities with his new status but instead found himself facing a trio of mid-level British fighters in the U.K. He then dropped the title to the unheralded but formidable Harry Simon under spurious circumstances in South Africa in August 1998.

He returned to America, signed with Don King and soon found himself facing young rising star Fernando Vargas for the IBF title in December 1999. In his HBO debut, Wright fought the "Ferocious One" to a standstill but dropped a majority decision.

A second win over McKart and ex-WBC titlist Keith Mullings set Wright up for a shot at the vacant IBF belt against Robert Frazier in 2001. He easily outboxed Frazier to become a two-time titleholder.

Wright had by now signed with influential managers James Prince and Antonio Leonard, who helped broker a deal with Roy Jones Jr's. Square Ring promotional company. Winky became a fixture on the undercard of Jones' fights on HBO.

Finally, after four marking-time defenses, Wright challenged Ring Magazine champion Shane Mosley for the undisputed (IBF/WBA/WBC) junior middleweight crown.

"It was a super-huge fight," he said. "It was a fight for me to become a household name. Right before that, 'Sugar' Shane beat Oscar De La Hoya twice. He was the man.

"For me, I knew from being the outcast in Europe and not being able to get the big fights over here, the only way you can be the man is if you beat the man. I always wanted to fight the man. I always wanted to fight the best."

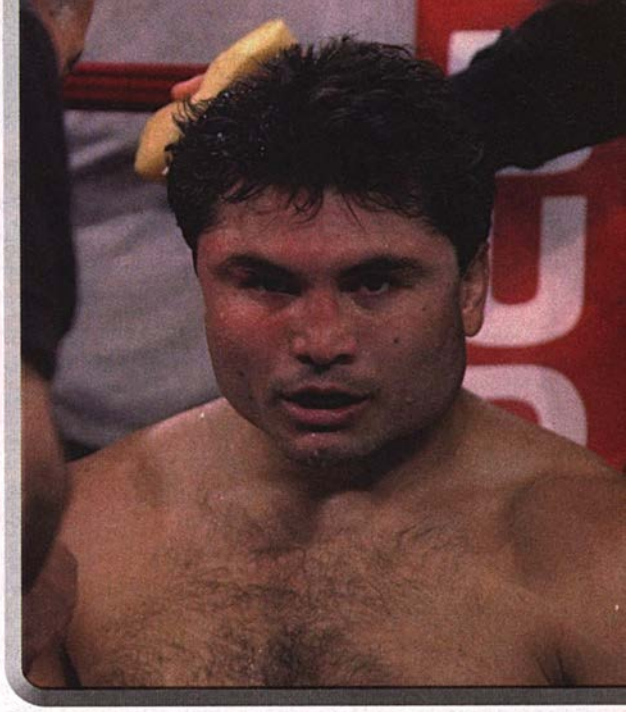
Wright didn't disappoint and widely outpointed Mosley, not once but twice in 2004. And with no more challenges left at junior middleweight, he moved up to 160 and put on a clinic against Felix Trinidad, nearly shutting out the Puerto Rican legend in May 2005. That victory in an HBO Pay-Per-View main event led to a middleweight title-elimination bout against Sam Soliman, which Wright won to set up a showdown with Ring Magazine/WBC/WBO middleweight champ Jermain Taylor in June 2006. The two battled to a stirring (and controversial) draw, which Wright believes he won.

However, unable to secure a rematch with Taylor, he met Bernard Hopkins at a 170-pound catchweight in July 2007 and lost a unanimous decision. He dropped a decision to Paul Williams in April 2009, took a three-year break and then lost to Peter Quillin in June 2012 before bowing out of boxing with a record of 51-6-1 (25 knockouts).

Wright, now 48, still lives in Florida. He has four children and is involved in real estate. He likes to travel, and his favorite hobby is golf (he plays with a 10 handicap). He is friends with several sports stars who live near him, such as former baseball player Gary Sheffield.

"I enjoy life. It wasn't like once I stopped boxing, things would change," said the low-key 2018 International Boxing Hall of Fame inductee. "I was doing pretty much the same thing as when I was fighting. I don't miss the training and politics."

Here's what he had to say about six of his most memorable nights in the ring:



JULIO CESAR VASQUEZ

August 21, 1994, Saint-Jean-de-Luz, France • Titles: WBA junior middleweight

"[The Acaries] brought me over for each fight. I would come in a week before the fight. This was the only fight where I stayed over for about a month. I trained in Nice [and] I wish I wouldn't have done it. They said, 'You might want to stay a little longer and train over here and get acclimated to it.' It was my first world title [fight], so I did it. Training, eating and everything was difficult for that long, but I did it.

"Training was good, but at the end of training camp my (boxing) shoes were wore out, so I went to a shoe store and they put a different sole on the bottom. But the sole they put on the bottom of my shoe was so slippery in the ring. That's why I kept slipping and I couldn't maintain my balance the way I wanted to. It was a great fight, even though it was a loss. That fight showed me I could fight the best. He was a very good, strong puncher, a hard-fought champion, and for me at 22 to fight a tough fight with him and go 12 rounds, get knocked down five times and get up, that showed me I had the heart and will to be a champion. I thought, 'OK, I can come back and do it again.' I knew [I could be champion] if I could fight this fight on my worst day, because I wasn't able to stand and take a firm grip on the ground because my foot kept slipping. I had to stick and move, and I kept slipping. I couldn't put as much power in my shots as I wanted. The more the floor got wet, the more slippery it got. I learned a great deal from that fight. At first I was so angry, but in the long run I realized that fight helped me become the fighter I became."

RESULT: VASQUEZ UD 12

FERNANDO VARGAS

December 4, 1999, Chinook Winds Casino, Lincoln City, Oregon • Titles: IBF junior middleweight

"He was the young kid coming up. HBO wanted him. He was 17-0, 17 knockouts. They were looking for that name, and I had the name to give him that credibility. At that time, I was trying to get back over to the United States and I wanted to fight on HBO and they wouldn't give me any fights. Vargas, because of who he was, they expected him to go in there and knock me out. This fight, I changed my style. I did it at the fight; I didn't train that style. The kid talked a lot of trash. He got under my skin, where I wanted to punish him. He was young. I thought, 'You're beating everyone because you should be. They're putting you in with people you should beat, but I'm not one of them people. I'm the one who is going to beat you.' It was a great fight. I definitely thought I won the fight. He took a lot [of punishment with] the pressure I was putting on him. It was all about Vargas. HBO already had Ike Quartey [lined up to face Vargas next]. I was supposed to be a stepping stone."

RESULT: VARGAS MD 12

SHANE MOSLEY

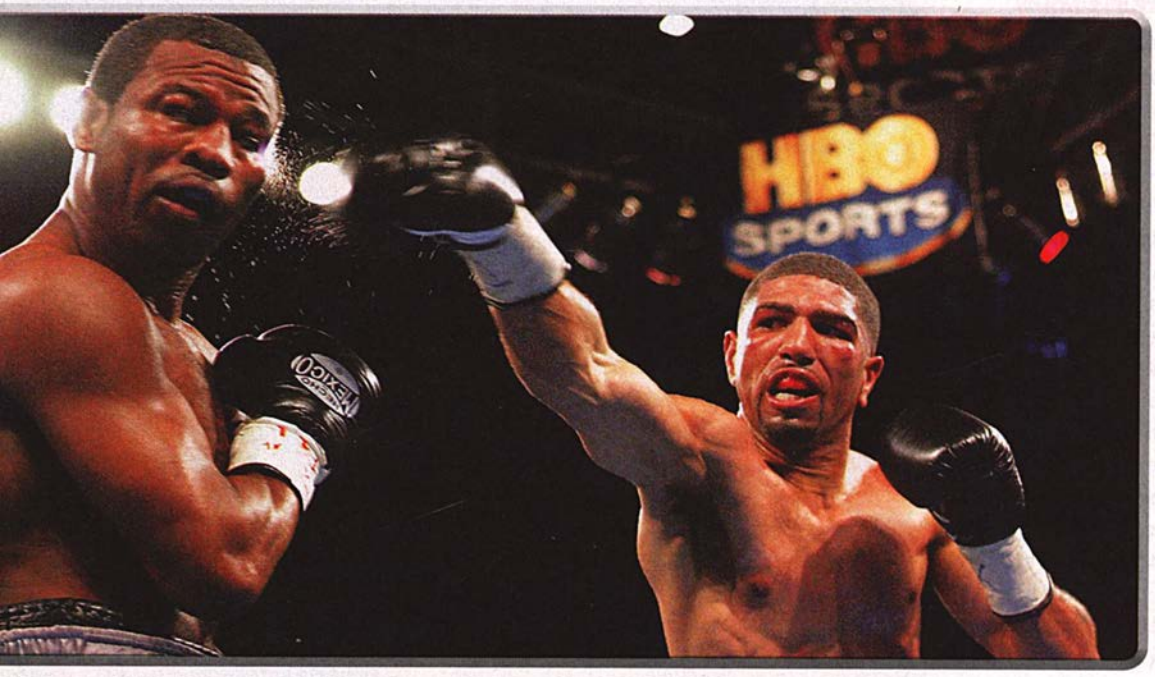
March 13, 2004, Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, Las Vegas • Titles: Ring/IBF/WBA/WBC junior middleweight

"When I was fighting overseas, my European promoter would bring me to Las Vegas. I'd see (Mike) Tyson and everyone. I'd tell my promoter, 'One day I'm going to be here and have my name on the billboard.' People say that, but it doesn't happen. Then when I got my chance with Mosley, the buildup was crazy. It goes from poor to instantly famous and rich. The whole outcome is different. When I go to train, I've got people waiting on me hand and foot. Before, I had to go and hire people. It was a different atmosphere.

"When the fight came closer, I saw myself on TV all the time – the news, the sports. I loved it. When I was in Europe, they would do a lot of media on me, but over here I couldn't get that. It was good to be home and getting it. That first fight, I knew this would make me or break me. I kept telling everybody, 'Y'all think these people are better than me just because you get to see them on TV. The only time you're going to see that is if they fight me, and none of them will fight me.' For Sugar Shane to step up and say, 'You know what, I want to say I'm the best, and the only way I can do that is if I'm undisputed, and Winky has the other piece of the title' … I know his manager was telling him not to take that fight. Shane's strong-willed. He's like me; he thinks he can beat anybody.

"I knew that Shane had very quick hands, so for me it was, 'How are you going to stop the speed?' I'm not going to try to match my speed with him. What I am going to do is I have a great jab; I'm going to try to knock that speed off. Every time he'd get ready, I'd hit him with a jab, a one-two. When he fell short, I'd hit him to his body, hard. I was 154 pounds, but Shane had moved up from 147, so I was pretty much bigger than Shane. I could see it and feel it when we got in the ring. He had quick hands, he's got a good punch, but he can't hurt me. I had noticed back in the day when Shane got ready to punch, he'd jump. I realized that, and then we worked on that. I've got long arms; I could put the jab out there and hit him and he couldn't reach me. That's what I did and started getting the left hand off and hitting him to the body. We celebrated the win in Las Vegas, partied – it was like I made it."

RESULT: WRIGHT UD 12



SHANE MOSLEY 2

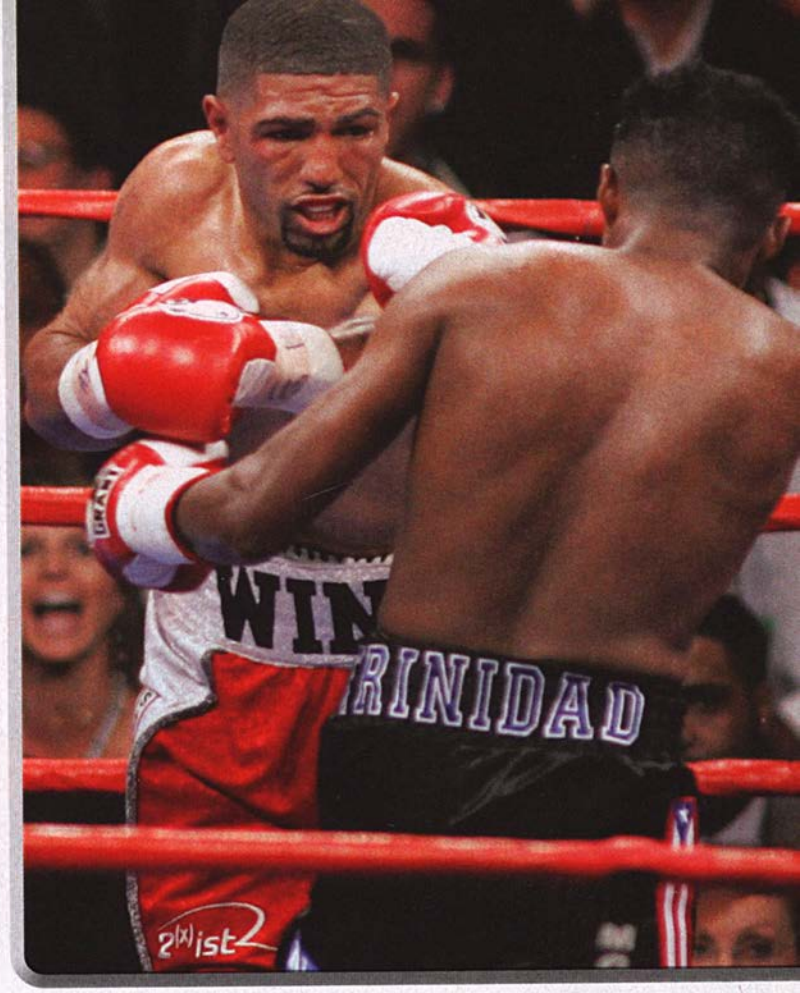
November 20, 2004, Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, Las Vegas • Titles: Ring/WBA/WBC junior middleweight

"He had a rematch clause and I knew he would do a rematch because he did it with Vernon Forrest. I felt like he couldn't beat me. He's not big enough or strong enough to beat me. He's got quick hands, but he can't beat me. The next fight, I knew he'd be coming. He did a little better, but at the end of the day he was too small. I was hitting him with good body shots and hooks and everything and won the fight. It changed my life real good. First fight, people said it was a fluke. Shane wasn't ready. Second fight, you've got to say, 'Winky Wright is a bad man; he beat Shane Mosley,' who everybody thought was a bad man. Now it's time to go out and beat the rest."

RESULT: WRIGHT MD 12

FELIX TRINIDAD

May 14, 2005, MGM Grand, Las Vegas • Titles: None



"The Trinidad fight was a megafight. The Shane fight made me a star, a household name, but Trinidad took me to that next level. He was a champion who had so many fans. To fight and beat Trinidad and the way I beat Trinidad took me to another level. Trinidad had just fought Ricardo Mayorga. He dismantled Mayorga before he fought me. They thought he was going to knock me out. For me to put my plan together and execute it in the way I did it was amazing. A lot of people didn't understand how I was able to do it. I did the press tour with him and we got to be really good friends. By the time we fought, I didn't want to hurt him, I just wanted to beat him. I could see when I was fighting and jabbing him I had busted his nose up. If you look in the later rounds, I was jabbing the top of his head. I wasn't trying to knock him out. It was more 'This is my dude.' Plus I wanted to do another fight, but I could never get that fight again. After the fight, we got to play golf together in Florida and Puerto Rico."

RESULT: WRIGHT UD 12

JERMAIN TAYLOR

June 17, 2006, FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee • Titles: Ring/WBC/WBO middleweight

"I'm trying to fight everybody who has a big name, but nobody wanted to fight. I never lost any of my titles when I unified the titles. I couldn't get Oscar (De La Hoya), nobody with a name to fight me, so that's when I moved up to middleweight. Jermain Taylor was undisputed and I was undisputed. I'm going to fight the man who had just beat Bernard Hopkins. I went to his [home region] and beat him and they called it a draw. My whole career has been a lot of bad decisions for me, I feel, but it is what it is and it made me who I am. It shouldn't have been the judges just looking at Jermain, because he's not just a big name – I'm a big name with him. I'm an undisputed champion just like him. I took the fight to him and backed him up. I hurt him. He was busted up. That fight changed me. I was so tired of them not giving me decisions I should have had. They didn't want the rematch; they lowballed me. The offer was more of the same. I took less the first fight to make the fight. Now everybody needs to get paid." RING

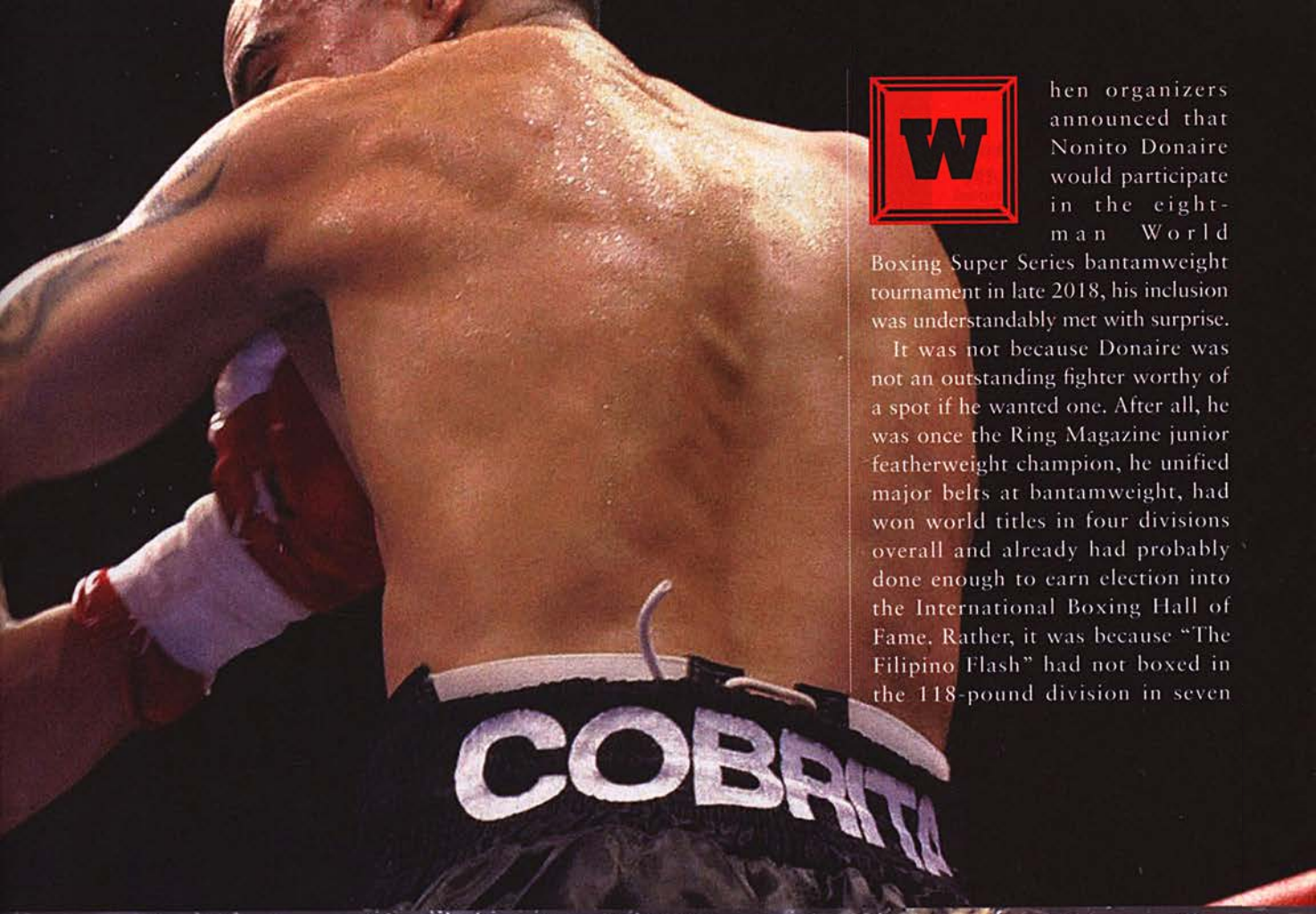
RESULT: D 12

Questions and/or comments can be sent to Anson at elraincoat@live.co.uk. Follow him on Twitter @AnsonWainwright.

FLASHBACK

The formidable Donaire of 2009 (top, vs. Raul Martinez) still lives within the Donaire of today (bottom, vs. Naoya Inoue).

ABOVE: JAY DIRECTO



NONITO DONAIRE'S DESIRE TO BE AN UNDISPUTED CHAMPION IS AGAIN BURNING BRIGHT AFTER HIS UNEXPECTEDLY BRILLIANT ENCOUNTER WITH NAOYA INOUE IN 2019

By **Dan Rafael**

When organizers announced that Nonito Donaire would participate in the eight-man World Boxing Super Series bantamweight tournament in late 2018, his inclusion was understandably met with surprise.

It was not because Donaire was not an outstanding fighter worthy of a spot if he wanted one. After all, he was once the Ring Magazine junior featherweight champion, he unified major belts at bantamweight, had won world titles in four divisions overall and already had probably done enough to earn election into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Rather, it was because "The Filipino Flash" had not boxed in the 118-pound division in seven

KAZUHIRO NOGI / AFP

years and planned to drop down two weight classes to participate, which was viewed by many as a Herculean task for a boxer already in his mid-30s.

The last time Donaire had fought as a bantamweight was in 2011, when he cruised to a shutout decision over Omar Narvaez to retain his unified title. He then moved up to junior featherweight and embarked on a 2012 in which he won four fights, unified a pair of 122-pound belts and was selected fighter of the year by various media outlets and the Boxing Writers Association of America.

He would go on to win a featherweight world title in 2014 and another junior featherweight belt in 2015 before returning to the 126-pound division, suffering a brutal stoppage to Nicholas Walters and a decision loss to Jessie Magdaleno along the way. After a decision loss to Carl Frampton in 2018, Donaire was not sure what to do, but then the WBSS began looking to fill the field for its bantamweight tournament and Donaire decided he wanted in. His promoter, Richard Schaefer of Ringstar Sports, who was also involved in the WBSS, secured him a spot. And it proved to be a career reawakening for Donaire. He found new life in his old stomping grounds.

He won his quarterfinal bout by fourth-round stoppage of an injured Ryan Burnett to claim a world title and defended it with a massive sixth-round knockout of replacement foe Stephon Young in the semifinals. That set the stage for an unexpected appearance in the final for a unification fight against tournament favorite and three-division titlist Naoya Inoue, the Japanese "Monster" and a pound-for-pound star in his prime who had stormed through the first two tournament fights in less than three rounds.

The November 2019 final in Saitama, Japan, was expected to be a coronation for Inoue against a big-name fighter in the twilight of his career. Instead, it turned into an action-packed rumble with Donaire forcing Inoue to survive the crucible of by far the most grueling fight of his career.

Donaire opened a gash over Inoue's right eye with a left hook in the second round, which Inoue later said caused double vision for the rest of the fight. Donaire also fractured Inoue's orbital bone and nose, which bled from the third round on.

In the unforgettable 11th round, Inoue dropped Donaire with a left to the body and nearly finished him before Donaire stormed back to hurt him. Then Inoue turned the tables and nearly dropped Donaire again before they continued to slug it out in the 12th round and sealed what was picked as 2019 Fight of the Year by The Ring, the BWAA and ESPN.

Although Inoue won a unanimous decision – 117-109, 116-111 and 114-113 – he certainly looked worse for wear compared to Donaire, who elevated himself by showing to all that he was still an elite fighter even at age 36.

"I've always had it. Goes to show I still have it," said Donaire, now 37. "I'm a very disciplined fighter. Overall, I am not one of those guys that just falls down and stays down. If you take me down, I'm always gonna get up and get better. It shows the spirit I have, and when everybody thought I didn't have anything else, I showed something amazing. With the right focus and the right mind, I'm still as dangerous as I was 10 years ago."

Two years earlier, aging heavyweight legend Wladimir Klitschko had pushed the much younger and heavily favored Anthony Joshua to his limits before losing the 2017 Fight of the Year. Klitschko, having elevated himself in gallant defeat, thought about exercising his rematch option but eventually elected to retire. After the Inoue fight, Donaire (40-6, 26 KOs) found himself in a similar position to Klitschko but never seriously considered retirement.

"You think about that kind of stuff, but I'm so opposite. When I win, it makes me want to retire," Donaire said. "When I lose, it makes me want to keep going, and this is where I'm at right now. I have this fire in me to get the rematch and get the big fights all over again. When I was winning the fights in 2012, I wanted to retire. And then I lost, and I'm like, 'No, f-- this.' I went back into training the following week.

"My wife (Rachel Donaire, who is also Nonito's manager) is always behind me but says if you're going to do it, you have to do it 100 percent. If you don't, get the heck out of there."

Donaire decided to give it 100 percent and Schaefer, who was with him in Japan, said the notion of retirement was never raised.

"There was never a second where the word retirement came out of his mouth or my mouth," Schaefer said. "I was very proud of how Nonito fought. Nonito is the kind of fighter who has been in fight of the year, round of the year, won the KO of the year (against Vic Darchinyan in 2007 and Fernando Montiel in 2012), so he's a big-time fighter, and he showed there's no reason to retire. He's 37, but that's a young 37 and he had plenty of rest between fights."

So, Donaire forges on with what he says is similar excitement and

The affable Donaire, seen here in Manila, has always been a people's champion.

Donaire came out on the losing end against Inoue but took the pound-for-pound entrant to hell and back.

dedication as when he was a younger fighter. But for his first fight since the Inoue classic, Donaire didn't want a tune-up. He wanted a real-deal opponent and a chance to pursue his ultimate boxing goal of being an undisputed champion.

He will start his efforts anew when he returns to action to headline a Showtime-televised card on December 12, challenging WBC bantamweight titleholder Nordine Oubaali (17-0, 12 KOs), a 34-year-old French southpaw making his third defense.

"The only thing I haven't accomplished in boxing is being undisputed, and that's what I tried for in the tournament. I wanted all the belts," Donaire said. "That's my goal. It's always been my goal from the very beginning of my career to hold all the belts. That's one of the things that motivates me to keep going."

Donaire is hoping he can lift the WBC title and eventually unify with Inoue or whoever else holds belts. But Oubaali is no pushover. He is technically sound, strong and vastly experienced as a 2008 and 2012 Olympian. He owns pro wins against Rau'shee Warren and Takuma Inoue (the then-undefeated younger brother of Naoya), whom Oubaali outpointed on the Inoue-Donaire undercard.

"I've seen the way [Oubaali] fights. I've sparred with him. I know exactly what he's capable of," said Donaire, noting that he will be 38 by the time they fight. "Good mentally and physically, he's strong. But there's a lot of limitations I can exploit. He deserves to be a champion, but I am going for that belt and that's just how it is."

According to Donaire, they sparred about six rounds together when Oubaali was getting ready to face Warren for the vacant title on the Manny Pacquiao-Adrien Broner card in Las Vegas in January 2019.

"One of the guys on his team I know called me and asked me if I'd spar him," said Donaire, a right-hander who turned around to spar as a southpaw in order to simulate Warren. "I was just helping him out. I wasn't in fighting shape, but they just asked me if I can give him a little bit of rounds near the end of his training."

Donaire said the experience was very helpful for preparing for the real fight.

"I can go in there and spar and know what to do in a fight," Donaire said. "His reaction and movement is going to be the same. I know what he's going to do, what direction he's going in. It was very beneficial. My coach, Kenny Adams, he was like, 'I don't want you sparring him, because you'll end up fighting him.' But I said, 'Don't worry; I learn more when I spar somebody.'"

Schaefer, who has worked with his share of aging legends – such as Oscar De La Hoya, Bernard Hopkins and Shane Mosley – is pleased to have helped deliver Donaire another title opportunity this late in the game.

"You cannot overlook Oubaali. He's undefeated. He's a dangerous fighter," said Schaefer, who used to promote Oubaali. "For Oubaali, this would be a signature win. He's all fired up. But Nonito is hungrier than ever. He feels that against today's competition, he's right there. He is really hungry, motivated – a gym rat, always working out, always in shape. He can't wait to get his hands on Oubaali. He's undefeated, but Oubaali never fought anyone the caliber of Nonito Donaire and Nonito has been in many big fights. That's what he lives for. So for him to have an opportunity to become world champion again at this point of his career is really everything he wanted.

"He can fight from 118 to 126, potentially even 130 if it's the right fight. These are loaded divisions with many big fights. But first things first. He knows how important it is to win this fight and become a world champion again. The way he looked against Inoue, who everybody said was the 'Monster,' showed Inoue is beatable and maybe not the 'Monster' everybody said he is. Inoue was never really in the ring with someone like Nonito Donaire, who showed he still belongs at the top of the weight class."

Donaire agrees, believing his decision to return to bantamweight was critical in extending his career.

"Not getting the decision (against Inoue) was very disheartening, because you train hard for that fight. But, overall, I think that it really brought me back to my prime, really brought me back to where I want to be. [Bantamweight] is my best weight," said Donaire, whose first world title came as a flyweight in 2007. "I can pretty much make the weight without any suffering. In this weight class, I feel really good, really strong, and I'm the bigger guy. I fit in all over again in this division."

He knows, however, that there will eventually be a time when he will retire, even if he feels it's still a few years away.

"It depends how my body works," he said. "Right now, I feel like I'm 20 years old. I feel good and I'm training harder than everyone else, so it depends. One way or another, it will come to me and I will say, 'You know what? I'm done. I'm happy where I'm at and I don't want any more of it' and move on with something else in life."

That time, however, has not yet come.

SOUL OF A CHAMPION

ADONIS STEVENSON'S RISE TO THE TOP OF THE LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION WAS IMPRESSIVE, BUT IT WAS ONLY A PRELUDE TO THE FIGHT OF HIS LIFE

By **Joseph Santoliquito**

Crazy was fistfighting God to breathe life into a lifeless body. Crazy was going to pull him up from that hospital bed. Crazy was going to walk him across that darkened room when no one was there. Crazy was going to feel the cold tile under his feet as he shuffled along.

Crazy kept urging him: *You're going to walk on your own; no one is going to help you.*

All fighters carry an amount of crazy in them. Some more so than others.

Adonis Stevenson hauls truckloads of crazy – along with heaps of faith.

Within the span of a week after Stevenson's light heavyweight title brawl with Oleksandr Gvozdyk on December 1, 2018, Stevenson's family and friends were told he wouldn't live—twice. Even if he survived, they were told, he would be a vegetable, unable to walk, talk, see or eat on his own.

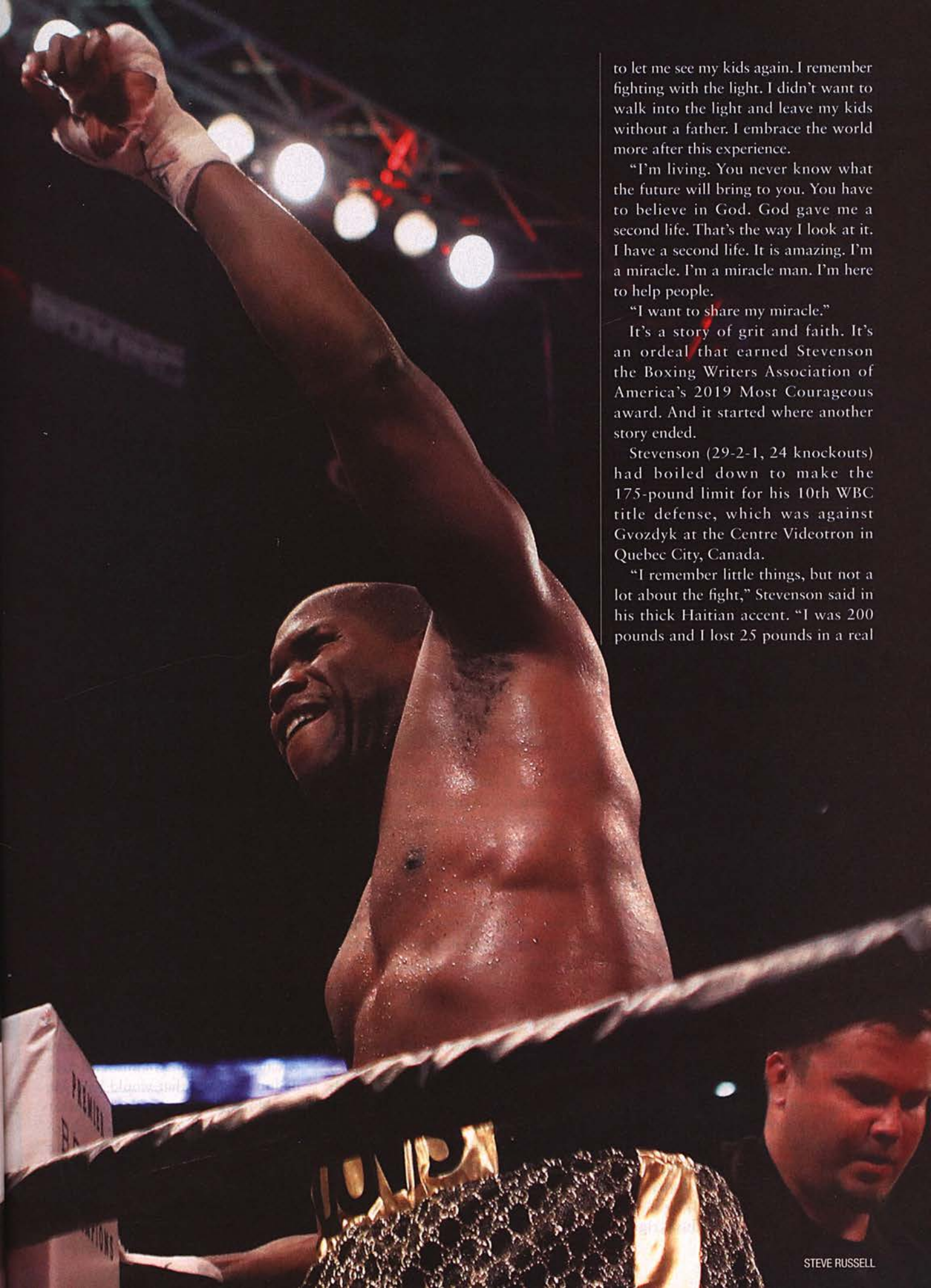
Today, when you see the former Ring Magazine champion, he can break out into a song at any moment or emit one of his raucous laughs that fills a room and seemingly carries for miles.

He loves life more. He laughs more. He sings more. He cries more. He's *more*.

The Haiti-born, 43-year-old southpaw was in a coma for 17 days. Scans revealed the part of the brain that triggers a recovery from a coma was a black hole. Stevenson doesn't remember anything during that stretch. What does resonate is this ...

"I spoke to God," he says. "I fought God with my fists; I pleaded with Him

Badou Jack (left) and Bernard Hopkins honor Stevenson at the 2019 WBC convention.



to let me see my kids again. I remember fighting with the light. I didn't want to walk into the light and leave my kids without a father. I embrace the world more after this experience.

"I'm living. You never know what the future will bring to you. You have to believe in God. God gave me a second life. That's the way I look at it. I have a second life. It is amazing. I'm a miracle. I'm a miracle man. I'm here to help people.

"I want to share my miracle."

It's a story of grit and faith. It's an ordeal that earned Stevenson the Boxing Writers Association of America's 2019 Most Courageous award. And it started where another story ended.

Stevenson (29-2-1, 24 knockouts) had boiled down to make the 175-pound limit for his 10th WBC title defense, which was against Gvozdyk at the Centre Videotron in Quebec City, Canada.

"I remember little things, but not a lot about the fight," Stevenson said in his thick Haitian accent. "I was 200 pounds and I lost 25 pounds in a real

STEVE RUSSELL

short period of time. That killed me. My body was blocking everything I tried to do. I lost too many pounds before the fight.

"In boxing, you need a lot of energy. I didn't have any that night. I usually feel my punches when I hit someone. I couldn't feel my punches or my movement. I couldn't really punch. I was trying and I couldn't do what I normally do."

It showed.

Gvozdyk (15-0 with 12 KOs at the time) was taking advantage of the drained five-year beltholder.

"Superman" was 41 then. Compounding that, he might have been slightly enervated by a brutal back-and-forth struggle in his previous fight, when Stevenson fought Badou Jack to a majority draw in May 2018.

After a slow start, Gvozdyk had swayed the fight in his favor from the seventh round on and knocked Stevenson out at 2:49 of the 11th. At the time of the stoppage, Stevenson was winning on the scorecards of judges Jack Woodburn (98-92) and Guido Cavalleri (96-94), while judge Mike Ross had it even at 95-95.

Larger problems loomed and would soon arrive.

Yvon Michel, Stevenson's promoter throughout much of his career, felt supremely confident Superman was beating Gvozdyk.

At the outset of the 10th, Stevenson appeared to have Gvozdyk in some trouble when he connected with a left to the chin. But Gvozdyk recovered midway through the round and it looked like Stevenson had punched himself out.

That set the stage for the 11th.

Stevenson took a right to the head that backed him up with around 1:10 left in the round. Gvozdyk landed another right as the one-minute mark approached. Sensing he was giving Stevenson problems, an emboldened Gvozdyk poured on the pressure. He stepped forward with a right that stunned Stevenson, followed by a left that forced him against the ropes.

Stevenson, seemingly out on his feet, took another flush right, releasing a halo of sweat, before crumbling to the canvas.

Stevenson says rapid weight loss drained his energy ahead of the Gvozdyk fight.

Referee Michael Griffin didn't even bother to count.

Boxing is the heart's cry for personal peace. Adonis Stevenson was about to lose his. He had been a restless soul through the early portion of his life. Boxing gave him discipline. Boxing gave him substance. Because as a teenager, Stevenson had survived the nasty streets of Quebec. By his early 20s, he was a pimp, doing a four-year prison stretch, vowing upon release that he would never return.

Now, with this traumatic injury, boxing would be taken away for the rest of his life.

Michel ran into the ring to check on Stevenson. He asked Superman how he felt. Stevenson kept repeating, "Don't worry. Don't worry." Michel told him they would talk later in the dressing room – after Michel checked the scorecards to reassure himself that Adonis was still ahead at the time of the stoppage.

"I remember sitting down in the dressing room next to him, showing him the scorecards," Michel recalled. "I remember telling Adonis what happened to him had happened to many of his opponents in the past, and that he would be back.

"It was unfortunate how it ended, but I was still feeling Adonis had one or two more fights left. He wanted a rematch with Gvozdyk and then fight Badou Jack and that would be it. He would retire. In my mind, this is what we were going to do."

Stevenson asked Michel if he should meet with the media. First he wanted to take a shower. Michel had left to watch another fight when he received a call on the arena floor that something was happening in Stevenson's dressing room.

Michel found Adonis confused and shivering, complaining that he was cold. The commission doctors immediately called for a stretcher. But Stevenson refused to lie on it. Instead, in a peculiar portrait, he sat on the edge of the stretcher as Lamont Jones, Premier Boxing Champions vice president and general counsel of boxing operations, escorted Adonis and his family to the Quebec-Laval University Hospital, a facility that specializes in head trauma, as a precautionary measure.

Feeling Stevenson was in good hands, Michel went back to the arena to watch the live video screening of Deontay Wilder-Tyson Fury I from Los Angeles. Within seconds, he received a call from Jones. Things didn't look good, Jones said. Moments later, Jones called again to tell Michel that Adonis' condition had taken a serious turn.

Michel ran to his car.

"I remember the drive to the hospital, worried he had a brain bleed and it was worse than expected," Michel said. "I didn't think it would be fatal. When I got to the hospital, I went right to his room. He was lying there with tubes in his mouth and nose."

That's when Michel was ushered to a secluded room to be with Stevenson's family. The attending doctor told them, "Adonis won't see the morning; it's a matter of hours." Stevenson's brain was exploding under the pressure. His brain grew so swollen that there was little the medical professionals could do.

Claudette Adonis, Stevenson's mother, let out a gut-wrenching wail, lamenting the impossible. Jones called PBC CEO Al Haymon, who told the family he could immediately move Stevenson to where he could get better care.

The medical team told the family that it was impractical to move him. Besides, the facts were irrefutable. Every test would show the same result: He won't survive the night.

Stevenson himself faintly remembers portions of what transpired. He said it was like he was watching a movie and his eyes were the projectors slowly fading to black. He recalls trembling in the shower after the fight and the throbbing pain in his head seeping down the rest of his body.

"It was like my insides were burning up when the doctors got to me (in the dressing room)," Stevenson remembered. "I told the doctors that I wasn't feeling right. They brought a stretcher in. If I was going to go, I wasn't going to go lying down on a stretcher.

"So I sat."

When he reached the hospital, Stevenson said, that's when things went awry. He remembers being in a surreal state, seeing people frantically gesturing around him yet unable to understand what they were saying.

It was as if something was lifting him away.

"I could only feel the pain. I was in another world; it was like a dream," Stevenson recalled. "You're watching these things around you and you don't understand anything."

A MIRACLE RECOVERY AND THE HEALING AHEAD

Seated in the hospital corridor, head in his hands, Michel began replaying portions of the fight in his mind. How could this happen? Michel tried rationalizing it, though he

couldn't find an answer. He and Jones each asked themselves a thousand questions while they waited for some word about Stevenson's condition.

At 1:30 on Sunday morning, December 2, the Stevenson family was told again that there was no hope. A few hours later, the family was greeted by a doctor who reported a new development, stating, "Not that I want to give you big hope, but Adonis tried to unplug the tubes with his left hand."

Michel, who was with his wife, Stephanie, broke down in tears. The Canadian promoter has been in boxing since 1980 and this was the first time something like this ever happened to one of his fighters.

Jones, along with Marcus and Brandon Watson, Sam Watson's sons, were constantly on the phone providing updates to Haymon as well as PBC's Sam Watson and Sylvia Browne-Owens.

"Al, Lamont, the whole PBC team were real rocks throughout this whole thing," Michel said. "They stayed with Adonis and his mother and provided everything. It was as if Al provided them with a blank check. There were a lot of heroes on Adonis' shoulders throughout this, and Lamont and Al are certainly two of them."

They'd been on the verge of leading in a priest to deliver the last rites, but once Stevenson showed signs of brain activity, he was rushed into surgery. He was really Superman that night, December 2, 2018.

Michel left for the Sergey Kovalev-Eleider Alvarez promotion in New York while his wife stayed to provide updates. It wasn't long before the news again turned dire and he was back in Quebec City to see Adonis for what would probably be the last time.

In the hospital room, his fighter teetering on the brink of death, Michel managed to lean in with a comforting hand on Adonis' shoulder and whisper to him, "You're still my champion."

With his eyes closed and on life support, Stevenson weakly lifted his right hand to gesture "number one."

"That told me he was still alive," Michel said. "Adonis even tells me today that he remembered that whisper. It was at a stage when we weren't certain what would happen to him. It's the first time I thought there was something alive in that body."

The family noticed, too. Slow hand movement graduated to opening his eyes a week later. Every day, Stevenson started to make improvements.

"It's a real miracle," Michel said. "The doctors told us there was a one percent chance that he would live. The second time, we were told he would die. Then a week after, we were told Adonis will possibly survive.

"But we were also told even if he lives, he will have brain damage, and that he would probably be blind, deaf and unable to walk for the rest of his life and possibly not even be able to breathe on his own.

"So, you're torn. If he survived, would he be better off if he died than if he lived? Would he be a prisoner in his own body? Would his quality of life be zero? It was a decision his family, all of us, feared. None of us wanted Adonis to live like that."

Stevenson lost 40 pounds. Subsisting on a liquid diet, he went from being a light heavyweight champion to skinny as a finger.

In February 2019, he was transferred from the Quebec City hospital to a Montreal rehab center. The first part of his rehab was recognizing colors on a wall, which progressed to knowing where he was.

But there was also something amazing going on that baffled everyone: Stevenson's entrenched boxing skills were still intact. Even when he couldn't walk, Jones would playfully ask him to give him a jab; a double jab; a double jab, left hand; a double jab, right hook.

He always had that. His boxing skills reinvigorated him and brought him back to life. It reached a cautious point where Jones and Michel would warn the rehab therapists to be careful when holding their hands up and asking Stevenson to hit them. Even though he was in a debilitated state, he was a world champion fighter who still possessed a devastating punch. If he had a flashback and threw a punch a certain way, someone could be hurt.

No one was, thankfully.

A month later, Stevenson received a special visitor. Showtime Hall of Fame announcer Steve Farhood took a flight to Montreal on March 27 to see Stevenson at the rehab clinic.

"When I went up, I didn't know what to expect, but I was pleasantly surprised to find him talking and walking, and walking well, at a relatively early juncture of his recovery," Farhood recalled. "More importantly, Adonis' mood was very positive. Adonis has the spirit of a fighter and a champion.

"That's something that can't be underestimated. The speed of his recovery was very welcoming and heartwarming. Anyone who has covered boxing for a long period of time has grown, unfortunately, to know each subdural hematoma case is different.

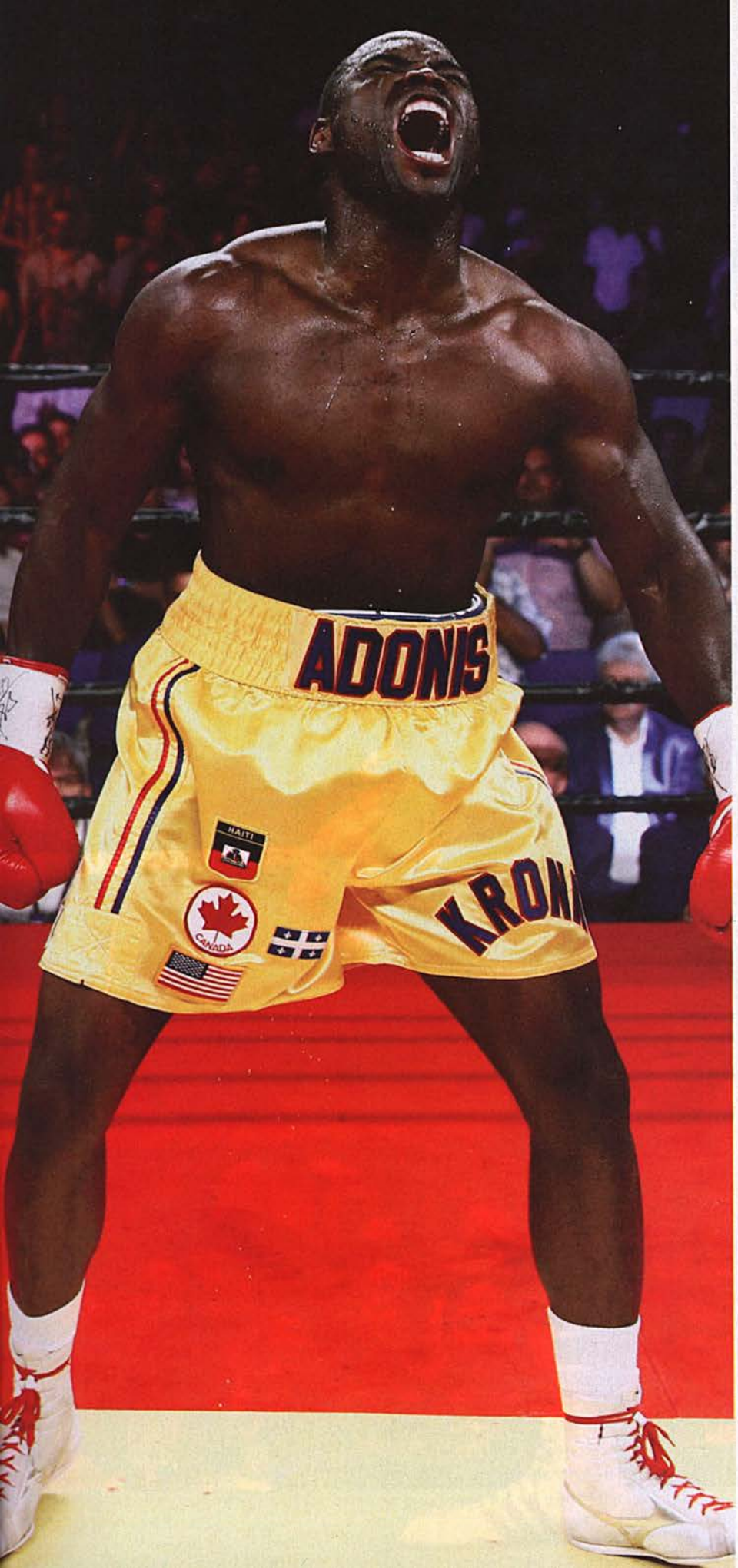
"You can't lump it all together. But a point worth mentioning, for all of the bitching we do in boxing, the one way that boxing has improved dramatically in the last four decades is ring safety. At least it gives a fighter the best chance, and that wasn't always the case."

Farhood's visit did come with a caveat. Though Stevenson was happy to see a familiar face, which seemed to buoy his disposition, no one else from the boxing world, other than from PBC, seemed to care.

"Yeah, I thought about that on the way back," Farhood said. "This was a man who almost lost his life and he seemed to be on the road to some kind of recovery. I was very uplifted by the experience. I felt good for what I saw.

"One of the reasons I went to see Adonis was because I wanted to show we still cared. Very few people in boxing paid any attention to Adonis after the injury. That, I thought, was sad."

Stevenson was later honored by the WBC in October 2019 at its annual convention in Cancun, Mexico, where his beaming smile could have lit a small city. Stevenson was moved to tears as he accepted the "Champion for Life" award from WBC president Mauricio Sulaiman, flanked on the



Spanning five-and-a-half years, Stevenson accrued a 9-1-1 record in world title fights.

dais by Bernard Hopkins and Badou Jack, who held up Stevenson's hands.

Stevenson sees his five children, ranging in age from 1 to 11, every day. He says he's a changed man because of what happened.

When he saw his kids for the first time after the coma, Stevenson turned into a marshmallow, hugging and kissing them, crying out, "Your father is back; he's back from the dead."

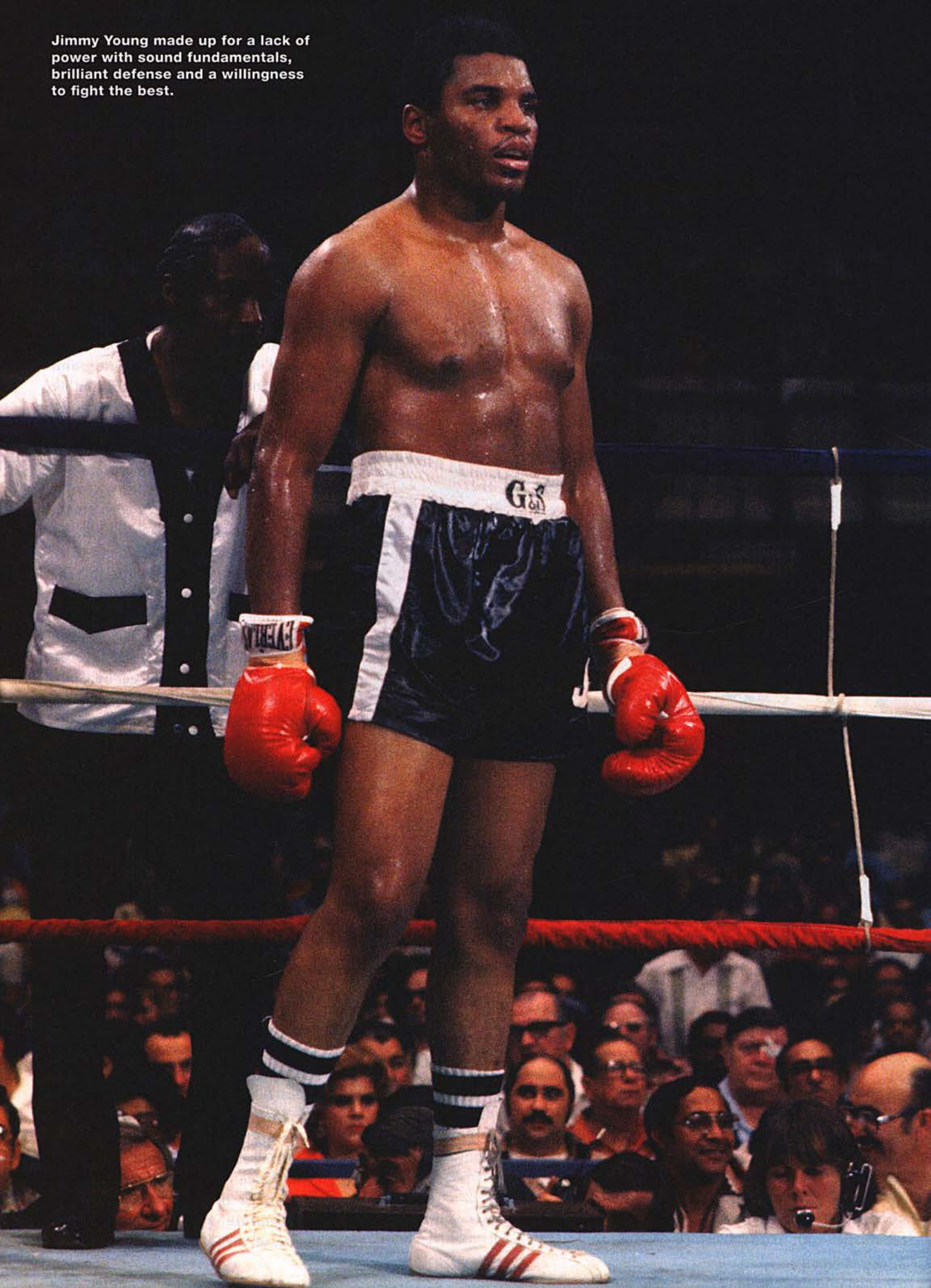
Claudette was certainly convinced her son's recovery was an act of God, considering the numerous times she was told Adonis' brain showed no activity.

"I kept telling myself to take it step-by-step," said Adonis, before breaking into a bad rendition of the 1990 New Kids on the Block hit by the same name. "I always thought I could return to normal. At night, in the hospital room, I made sure no one was around. I would get up, and I would tell myself, 'I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it. I'm going to walk across this room.'

"To me, taking those steps was my step [toward recovery]. You have to be a little crazy to do it, but you have to be a little crazy to get into the ring in the first place. I kept asking God, 'Please God, please God, help me.' When I was gone, I heard voices. When I was in the coma, God was talking to me.

"I kept telling myself to keep fighting. I made a lot of mistakes in my life. There are things that I've done when I was young that I'm not too proud of and I can't change. But I can be better. God gave me this second chance to be better."

Joseph Santoliquito is an award-winning sportswriter who has been working for Ring Magazine/RingTV.com since October 1997 and is the president of the Boxing Writers Association of America. He can be followed on Twitter @JSantoliquito.



Jimmy Young made up for a lack of power with sound fundamentals, brilliant defense and a willingness to fight the best.

THE GREAT OPPONENT

JIMMY YOUNG NEVER BECAME CHAMPION, BUT HIS BOXING SKILLS AND HEART PROVIDED A STERN TEST FOR SOME HALL OF FAME HEAVYWEIGHTS

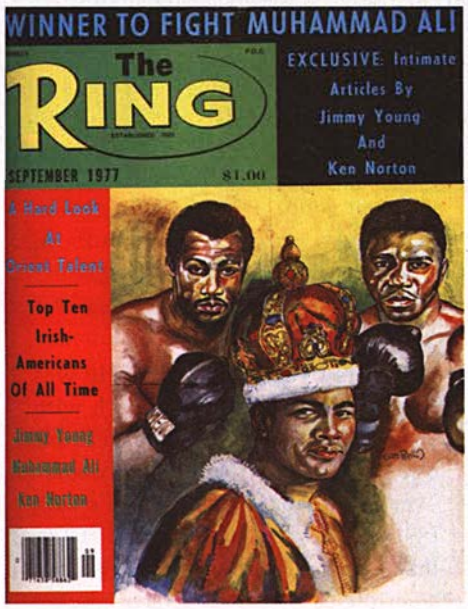
By **Tom Gray**

It was your typical Muhammad Ali fight. There was showboating, quick fists, multi-punch combinations, dazzling footwork and an almost psychic anticipation when it came to defense. A capacity crowd of 12,472 fans had fully expected to see these hallmarks on display at the Capital Centre in Landover, Maryland, on April 30, 1976. It was "The Greatest" after all. However, the disconcerting thing about this particular bout was that it was Ali's opponent who was executing.

The opponent's name was Jimmy Young.

The 34-year-old Ali was just one fight and seven months removed from his epic triumph over archrival Joe Frazier in "The Thrilla in Manila," which had been their third and most brutal encounter. In the interim, he had halted Belgian no-hoper Jean Pierre Coopman in five rounds in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Therefore the undisputed heavyweight champion was now required to face a legitimate contender.

Young had the reputation of a smart and sophisticated technician, and he was rated No. 3 according to Ring Magazine. However, Ali – who had defeated future Hall of Famers Ken Norton, Frazier (twice) and George Foreman within the previous three years – was now firmly established in the role of giant-killer and, perhaps understandably, he viewed Young as light work. Ali's official weight of 230 pounds (the heaviest of his career at that time) and matching girth highlighted his



Young mixed with the very best in the mid-to-late '70s.

flippancy during training camp. But taking this particular challenger for granted almost backfired. Young boxed brilliantly at times, whereas Ali was listless and inaccurate, and the unanimous decision scores of 72-65, 71-64 and 70-68 flattered him.

Many ringsiders felt that the 27-year-old Young deserved the victory, and not for the last time it was perceived that Ali's popularity, and not what was left of his fighting skills, helped him to retain the title. The tragedy of this story is that it was Young's first and final world title fight. Despite enjoying more success at the top level, he fought on for 14 more years, sustained irreversible physical damage and died from a heart attack at the age of 56. But how would Young's story have played out had the judges appreciated his light-hitting but razor-sharp boxing style? What if he'd gotten that decision against the great Ali?

"Ali was just playing around, laying on the ropes, and letting Young do whatever he wanted to do," said Philadelphia-based trainer and boxing historian Stephen Edwards, who watched a long-retired Young spar in the mid-1990s. "But in reality, Ali was old and shot. He didn't feel like dealing with a fast boxer at that time, so he just went through the motions. He played the judges and played the fans and made it look like he was playing with Jimmy Young. In truth, Ali didn't have the energy to deal with a younger guy at the time.

"The thing is, Ali was an icon, whereas Jimmy Young is looked upon as a good fighter with a bad record (Young was 17-4-2 going into the Ali fight). It's easy to take the fight away from Jimmy Young. It's one of these things where, 'OK, we're gonna take the fight away from Jimmy Young; nobody cares. It's not like he's a big ticket-seller or a big moneymaker. He's just a talented fighter with a bad record. Nobody cares if he wins a fight or not.'"

Young was born in Philadelphia on November 16, 1948. At 14 years old, he began boxing at the 23rd Police Athletic League Center as a means of defending himself after thugs stole his radio. Athletically gifted and astute,

he managed to snare two New Jersey Golden Gloves titles but ultimately decided to forgo a potentially successful amateur career by turning professional in October 1969. His management team was hardly what you would call experienced: Jack Levin, a Philadelphia electronics wholesaler; and Ray Kelly, who was in the automobile leasing business. Young was trained by a knowledgeable but unknown coach by the name of Bob Brown, and he began his professional ascent in relative anonymity. However, he would soon be fighting out of Joe Frazier's Gym in North Philadelphia and would frequently spar the great champion.

But without attractive amateur credentials or a shrewd matchmaker, Young was often in over his head. He was outpointed by fellow novice Clay Hodges in his third fight, but setbacks to more experienced campaigners like Roy Williams, Randy Neumann and Earnie Shavers were forgivable. Shavers stopped Young in three rounds, but that result triggered a turning point, as Young would go unbeaten in 12 fights over three years. He was robbed of victory in a rematch with Shavers and had to settle for a draw, but it was a virtuoso performance over No. 5-rated heavyweight Ron Lyle in Hawaii in February 1975 that saw Young establish himself as a serious contender. "I have always had confidence, but after I beat Lyle, I knew I was on my way," Young told The Ring in 1977. "I showed people what a boxer who is always thinking can do to a fighter who's just in there to take you out with one punch."

Ironically, it was Lyle, coming off this loss, who was granted a world title bout against Ali in May 1975, and Young had to wait another full year for his opportunity. Following the bitter disappointment of his controversial defeat to Ali, Young outclassed Lyle for a second time before being matched against monstrous former champion George Foreman. It proved to be the highlight-reel performance of his entire career.

"Jimmy Young was very good at operating in the ring," said Foreman, who dropped a unanimous decision

In a career-best win, Young outscored former heavyweight champion George Foreman in March 1977...

in March 1977. "He was the boxer, the actor; he could pull tricks; he was the wrestler. You know when wrestlers act like, 'Oh, he hit me illegally,' then put on a show? I can remember Young right now, holding the back of his head [and telling the referee], 'He hit me! He hit me!' (laughs) He needed a little bit more, but he was a fine boxer. He had nothing physically, but he was elusive and he kept thinking. His whole thing was boxing, boxing, boxing. Young had it all, and he got the decision over me."

The Foreman win would be named Ring Magazine Fight of the Year, and the seventh frame would receive Round of the Year honors. In that session, Foreman blasted Young with a lethal left hook and went all out for victory. "At the time, I thought it was all over," recalled Young afterward. "I can remember telling myself, 'Well, it's all over.' But then I regained my

composure and I said, 'No, it's not all over; this big lug can't finish me off.' Instead of running away, I decided to go after him."

Despite being badly hurt and on the precipice of a knockout loss, Young rallied and was outworking Foreman when the bell rang to end the round. History remembers the bout as an aberration, a blemish on Foreman's Hall of Fame resume that shouldn't be there, primarily because "Big George" had a spiritual awakening in the dressing room afterward and retired for 10 years to pursue a career as an evangelist. That is a disservice to Young.

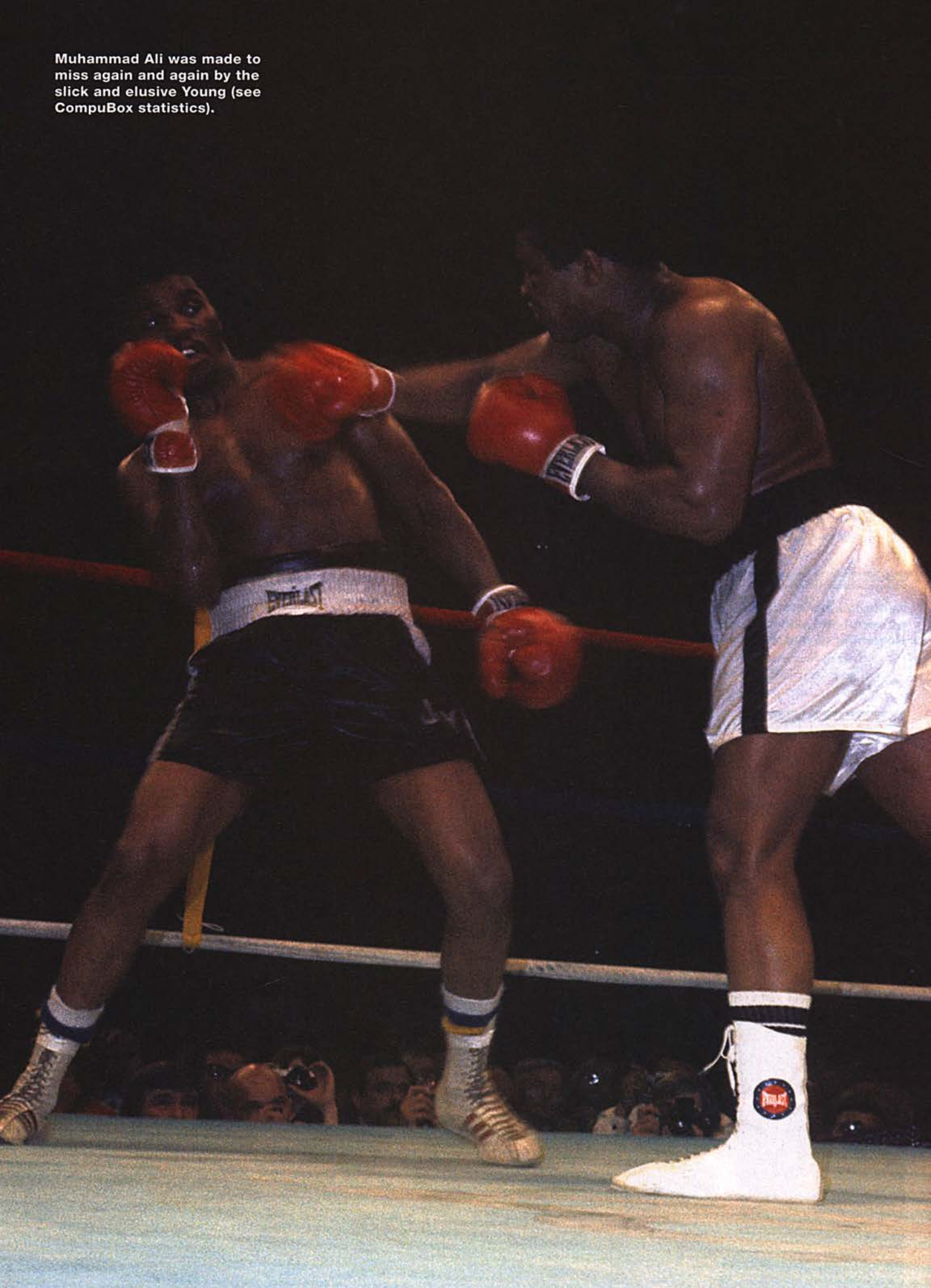
"It's a real win," countered Edwards in earnest. "Obviously Foreman had issues after the Ali defeat, but, at the time, he only had one loss, he was a big favorite, and Young earned that victory. Everybody has an excuse for why certain things happen. No fighter can be in the zone for every single fight of their career. Foreman had dropped off a little bit from the form he showed against Frazier and Norton, but we can't take credit from Young because Foreman was going through some mental issues. He has to get over it. Foreman was still a young man, 28, so he wasn't old. Young deserves the victory, but there's just some guys that will never get the credit that they deserve. Foreman wasn't on his best form, but he was still a formidable guy. Not just anybody could go in and beat Foreman like that, so Young deserves a lot of credit for that win."

One would think that a triumph of this magnitude would earn Young a second world title fight, but it was not to be. Ali, further into his decline, was in no rush to let Young float like a butterfly and sting like a bee, so he chose novice Alfredo Evangelista and Shavers for the remainder of his 1977 schedule. In a time where dinosaurs ruled the heavyweight landscape, Young, a tidy but one-speed boxing savant, was granted no favors.

"Sadly, it all depends on how you come up," said Foreman in relation to Young's plight. "With me, I won the Olympic gold medal, and the talk was that George Foreman would be the next heavyweight champion of the world. I'd have three professional fights and the talk was still, 'Here's George Foreman, the next heavyweight champion of the world!' But some fighters are only viewed as an opponent and they find it hard to shake that off with the judges, with the referee, with the audience. Jimmy Young, as good as he was, was never considered to be anything more than the opponent.

"With me, I fought 37 times before I went in against Joe Frazier [for the heavyweight championship], and every time I went into the ring, the man across from me was an opponent. They were good fighters, but once you get tagged as the opponent, there's a line that you cross and it's hard to get back. Maybe you took a fight because

... but fell just short against the powerful and skilled Ken Norton in November of that year.



Muhammad Ali was made to miss again and again by the slick and elusive Young (see CompuBox statistics).

you wanted to make a down payment on a truck. Maybe you just needed money, but you weren't in shape. That's what an opponent does."

Young's final big moment was a championship elimination bout against Ken Norton on November 5, 1977, at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. Once again, the Philly magician was in sparkling form, outmaneuvering his opponent throughout much of the contest and landing much cleaner shots than Ali managed through three fights totalling 39 rounds with the Adonis-like Californian. A devastating late-rounds body attack by Norton convinced two of the three judges that he'd done enough, and the more marketable fighter escaped with a split decision ... again. However, as Edwards pointed out, if Young had picked up that win, nobody could have complained.

In the final analysis, Young faced Ali, Foreman and Norton – three legends of the golden era – and he more than held his own. If he'd beaten Norton, it is highly likely that he would have been upgraded to full WBC champion, as Norton was when Leon Spinks gave Ali the chance to avenge a stunning upset loss rather than fulfill a pre-agreed WBC mandatory obligation. Spinks would ultimately defend the WBA version of the title against Ali, and Norton would make his first WBC title defense against the emerging Larry Holmes, losing a classic war via 15-round split decision. But what if Young had faced Holmes?

"I think Young would give Holmes fits, because boxers don't like other boxers," reasoned Edwards. "Norton was past his prime when he fought Holmes – way past it. He was almost 35. And look at the trouble he caused him. Boxers, guys who can box really well, guys who have good jabs and things, they don't like facing other guys that can do that. Larry Holmes is a great champion, but he doesn't like boxers. Look at the trouble he had with Tim Witherspoon's jab. Look at the trouble he had with Carl Williams; Williams drove him crazy. So he had a lot of trouble with boxers. Holmes would have won a decision because of his record and because he's a bit more forceful, but I think Jimmy Young would have probably given him fits. That would have been a really tricky fight for Holmes."

Holmes would reign from 1978 to 1985, and he is generally regarded as one of the finest heavyweight champions of all time. In terms of his physical attributes, he had adept movement, terrific hand speed, a dynamite left jab and a powerful right cross. Like many of the great heavyweights who came before him, "The Easton Assassin" was also durable, courageous and full of fight. As a result, Holmes, who went 48-0 before sustaining a single blemish on his record, has never been bashful when it comes to expressing his greatness. The former champion's modesty was therefore unexpected when he was asked for his thoughts on a mythical matchup between himself and Young, with whom he sparred dozens of rounds in the early and mid-1970s.

"That fight would probably end up a draw," Holmes disclosed to The Ring. "Jimmy and I would have been a good fight, because I knew how to stay away from him when he was getting ready to punch and he was the same way with me. Jimmy Young was a good fighter, man. You couldn't just go in there and beat him up. He was a good fighter who knew how to block punches, and he knew how to hold when he got in trouble.

"When you go back to those days and talk about great fighters, Jimmy Young was one of those great fighters. He had an awkward style that could throw you off, and he proved himself against Ali, George Foreman and Kenny Norton. Some people might not remember him, but I remember him, and that's all that matters."

The sport of boxing never crowned Young as champion or made him a millionaire. Instead, it tossed him head-first into a deadly division replete with great fighters and blatantly refused to appreciate his defensive style. He was betrayed on the scorecards in his biggest fight and ultimately betrayed further when boxing claimed his health in retirement. Perhaps praise from the kings with whom he shared the ring is the nearest we'll get to a happy ending.

"His heart was underestimated," said Foreman in earnest. "This man got in the ring with Ron Lyle and George Foreman. You give Jimmy Young a fight and he'll take it. The man had heart, and he wasn't afraid of anyone.

"Jimmy Young was a good boxer, smart and educated in boxing technique, and he knew how to protect himself. If he hadn't been tagged as an opponent, it would be a former champion of the world we'd be talking about. Isn't that the most remarkable story? I'm glad that someone is writing about Jimmy Young, because he was a remarkable man."

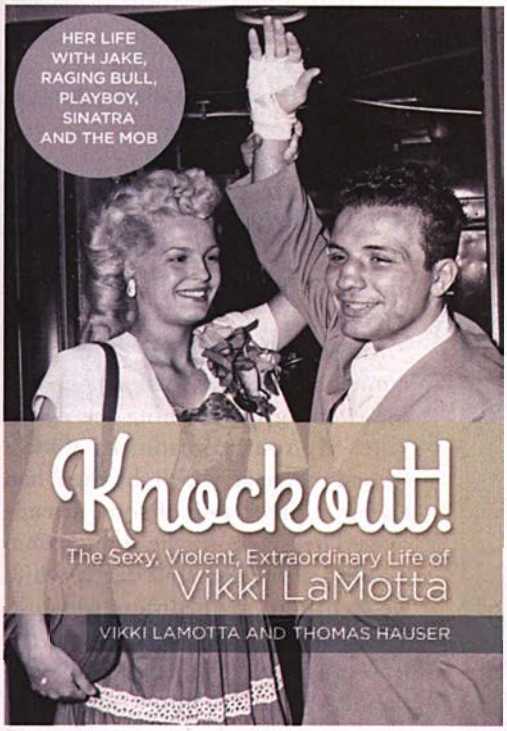
MUHAMMAD ALI VS. JIMMY YOUNG
PUNCH STAT REPORT

	Total Punches	Total Jabs	Power Punches
ALI	113/594	27/234	86/360
	19%	11.5%	23.9%
YOUNG	222/752	65/443	157/309
	29.5%	14.7%	50.8%

These statistics were sourced from Muhammad Ali: By The Numbers, *which was authored by Bob Canobbio and Lee Groves.*

Tom Gray is Associate Editor for Ring Magazine. Follow him on Twitter: @Tom_Gray_Boxing.

RAGING BULL,
ROBERT DE NIRO AND VIKKI LAMOTTA



Forty years have passed since *Raging Bull* premiered in New York on November 14, 1980. The film is widely acknowledged as a cinematic masterpiece and possibly the best boxing movie of all time. It reaffirmed Robert De Niro's status as an elite actor and brought Jake LaMotta fame and acceptance on a level that he'd never known before.

Vikki LaMotta had an inside view of it all. Long divorced from Jake, she was portrayed on screen by Cathy Moriarty and was very much involved in the film development process. The following pages are excerpted from *KNOCKOUT: The Sexy, Violent, Extraordinary Life of Vikki LaMotta,* co-authored by Vikki with Thomas Hauser. The book has just been reissued by Encore Press in print and eBook form and is available for boxing fans this holiday season.

In autumn of 1976, I heard from Jake. His life was in shambles. The Internal Revenue Service was investigating him for income tax evasion. His fifth marriage was on the rocks. He was working in a topless bar to get by. So why the telephone call?

"Vikki, I gotta tell you something. Robert De Niro wants to make a movie about my life."

Raging Bull, as the film was ultimately titled, had its origins in 1970. That was when Jake's autobiography, written with the assistance of Joseph Carter and Pete Savage, was published. Pete was a man who'd do anything for money. He and Jake had committed several robberies together as adolescents. When I married Jake, Pete was in prison. After his release, he came to our house once for about thirty minutes. That was the extent of our social contact. Later, he got into the film business making porn films.

After Rocky Graziano's book, *Somebody Up There Likes Me*, was made into a movie, Pete convinced Jake that there was money in another fight-game autobiography. Jake supplied the raw data; Pete embellished it; Joseph Carter did most of the work. And in my humble opinion, the book stank. Whole sections were fictionalized. The wife named "Vikki" wasn't me. Some passages glorified Jake more than he deserved. Others made him out to be worse than he'd been. I mean, really! Jake was bad enough. They didn't have to make him worse.

The book got mediocre reviews and sold poorly. Then, in 1973, Robert De Niro read it. De Niro liked the idea of playing a fighter and sent a copy to director Martin Scorsese. Eventually, Chartoff-Winkler Productions put up development money for the project.

Like Jake, De Niro had been born on Manhattan's Lower East Side. By the time Raging Bull was made and released, he'd starred in *Taxi Driver; Bang The Drum Slowly; The Deer Hunter; The Last Tycoon; New York, New York; Mean Streets* and *The Godfather, Part II*.

Martin Scorsese grew up in "Little Italy" in the 1940s, so he understood Jake's background and the random violence of urban America. Among his directing credits were *Mean Streets; New York, New York* and *Taxi Driver* (all with De Niro) and *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*.

Robert Chartoff and Irwin Winkler were among the most successful production teams in Hollywood. Together, they'd produced twenty-one movies, including *Rocky,* which was the biggest-grossing fight film of all time.

When Jake called to break the news, I wished him luck. At one point, I voiced the hope that the movie would be more honest than the book. That struck him as irrelevant. "Vikki," he said. "This movie is going to set me up for life. True, false; as long as I make money, I couldn't care less. They can make me a fag if they want."

That was the extent of our conversation. And since the movie was a long way from happening, I didn't think much about it. Then, a few months later, Pete Savage telephoned

(Opposite page) LaMotta and De Niro together in 1981, the year after *Raging Bull's* release.

to report that one of the writers who was working on the screenplay for De Niro and Scorsese wanted to speak with me. If they paid my way, would I come to New York? I said yes. Pete sent me airfare, met me at the airport and brought me to an office in Manhattan. Jake was there with a third person, who was introduced to me as the writer. For several hours, I answered a barrage of questions and everything was taped. Then Pete went downstairs for a bottle of wine, the writer went to the men's room, and Jake just sat there with a sad look on his face. It bothered me. I didn't like the vibrations I was getting. So I said to him, "Look, Jake, I'm not sure I'm doing the right thing by being here. I don't trust Pete. Is this all right?" Jake sort of grunted. And I asked him again, "Jake, tell me the truth. I'm trusting you. Is this all right?"

"Yeah, don't worry. It's all right."

So I went back to Miami without any real sense of what was happening. But something still bothered me. The meeting hadn't seemed right. Another month passed. Jake kept in touch. Then things got serious. Pete sent me a screenplay in the mail. I read the script. And it was frightening. One scene showed Jake hypnotizing me, ordering me to have oral sex with Pete and watching while we performed the act. Another segment – a dream sequence – had me in bed with a Black fighter, one of Jake's opponents. It was trash. And I didn't know what to do because, if the film was made, millions of people would see me in that light. So I telephoned Jake and told him I was furious, that whatever had been wrong between us, it wasn't like that.

And Jake answered, "Vikki, I know it's not true. But Pete wants it that way. We need it to get the movie people interested."

If that was what interested the movie people, then I wasn't interested.

That was that. I hung up. I wanted no part of Pete or Jake. Then a month later, Pete telephoned and said Robert De Niro wanted to meet me. And as turned off as I was to the project, I couldn't say no to meeting De Niro. Plus, if nothing else, this was my opportunity to be heard.

Arrangements were made for De Niro to come to Miami and stay overnight at my house. A new screenwriter, someone named Mardik Martin, was also scheduled to come. I drove to the airport to meet them.

In the baggage area, I recognized De Niro immediately. He was dressed casually in a tan jacket and slacks. All I could think was, "Oh my God, Robert De Niro." It was hard to believe that he'd come to Miami just to meet me. I introduced myself, and

De Niro's portrayal of LaMotta was reviewed in our February 1981 issue.

he told me to call him Bobby. Then Mardik Martin said hello. He was short with dark, curly hair and a mustache. I liked him instinctively. We got in the car, drove back to my house, settled in the living room, and they began throwing questions at me.

"Why was Jake so jealous when you were married? Are you sure you didn't fool around? What about Pete? Was there anything between the two of you?"

And I got angry. The nerve of these people. Who did they think they were? But I realized that all they knew about me was what Pete had told them. They were seeing me through his eyes, and it was up to me to convince them otherwise.

For most of the day, I tried to explain what it had been like to be married to Jake. How he was an unhappy man whose misery spilled over to everyone in his orbit. How ugly it had been, the fear and hate. But also the good things and the excitement. It must have been hard for Bobby and Mardik to understand what I was saying, particularly when I recalled something horrifying one moment and something nice the next. But as the day went on, they started to react differently toward me. I sensed they liked me and, more important, that they cared about the truth.

Mardik went to his hotel after dinner, and Bobby spent the rest of the evening questioning me about Jake. My son Harrison (by Vikki's second marriage which, by then, had ended in divorce) had some friends over. They were in the living room making a racket, so after a while we went into my bedroom to work. That's where I hung out most of the time anyway. The television was there. My girlfriends would come over, sit on the bed, eat pizza, and we'd watch TV or talk.

Except it was different being there with De Niro. I guess that's obvious. As soon as we got into the bedroom, Bobby stretched out on the bed with his hands folded beneath his head. I sat cross-legged, then eventually lay back, resting on an elbow. I liked Bobby. He was very low-key and easy to be with, genuine and nice. In some ways, he reminded me of Jake. All-consuming, driven less by motives than appetites. But unlike Jake, his emotions seemed balanced and in check.

So there we were, on opposite sides of a king-size bed. Yeah, I thought about "it." And so did he. That was obvious from his body language. For most of the evening, one or the other of us had an arm dangling toward the center of the bed, inches short of the other's shoulder. There was a lot of laughing punctuated by pregnant pauses and touching on the arm to

Vikki and Jake LaMotta attend the *Raging Bull* premiere at Sutton Theater in New York City.

LaMotta and rival Sugar Ray Robinson in 1951 during their sixth fight.

make a point. More than once, I told myself it would be the most natural thing in the world to make love.

But at the same time, it didn't seem right. This was business. We were there for the movie. Bringing sex into the relationship could ruin it. Why complicate matters and do something that would lend credibility to the lie that I'd slept around and was unfaithful to Jake? Besides, I'd never made a pass at a man in my life. Whatever happened, it wasn't going to originate with me.

So we sat there. Both of us aware of the sexual tension, both of us maintaining the separation between us. I could have done more to encourage Bobby's reaching out. Several times, I felt he was searching for a sign that he wouldn't be rebuffed. He couldn't have known it was all right. And maybe it wouldn't have been, certainly not later on for the future of the movie. That's what controlled it. I don't think either of us wanted to risk anything that would screw up the movie.

Finally, around two in the morning, Bobby asked, "Where should I sleep?"

"Where would you like to sleep?"

"Wherever you want me."

"You have a choice," I told him. "There's a bed here and a bed in the den."

"If I sleep here, where will you sleep?"

"I don't know. I guess I could sleep in the den."

There was a long pause. And I have to admit, by then I was telling myself, if he attacks me, that's cool.

"I'll sleep in the den," Bobby told me.

Bobby and Mardik Martin spent several days in Miami on their first visit. Most of that time, we talked about Jake or looked at scrapbooks and other memorabilia I'd saved from the marriage. Overall, I was impressed with the way they operated. But at times, it seemed unduly repetitious. Again and again, Mardik would ask questions I'd answered earlier for the writer I'd met with Jake and Pete. For a while,

I dutifully repeated my answers. Then I began prefacing each response with, "I already explained that to the other writer. Wouldn't it be easier for you to get the tape?" Invariably, Mardik would say no, he wanted me to answer again. That kept happening. "Why can't you just listen to the tape? I don't want to go through that story another time."

Finally, on the last day, Mardik looked at me and said, "Vikki, I have to tell you something. You keep talking about the other writer. There was no other writer. There's nobody else. I don't know what you're talking about. I'm the only one."

That shook me up. And it wasn't until later that I learned what had happened. Apparently, Jake and Pete had a contract with Chartoff-Winkler Productions that entitled them to $78,000 each. But they couldn't get it until I signed a release. In addition, Pete wanted a certain type of screenplay to feed his ego. To accomplish those ends, he and Jake hired someone to masquerade as a writer for the production company. Then, the day after my trip to New York, they went to Chartoff-Winkler with what they claimed was my release and got their front money. I never knowingly signed a release. Either my signature was forged or else Pete got me to sign by saying he needed my signature on a voucher to be reimbursed for my airplane tickets.

So there I was, with Mardik Martin telling me there had never been another writer. Jake and Pete had given Chartoff-Winkler a phony release, which meant the movie people believed they could portray me on screen any way they wanted. And I was furious. My first reaction was to get on the telephone and blow the project out of the water. That's how mad I was. I wanted to kill everything. Then I told myself, wait a minute. More important than Jake and Pete getting away with the money was having a good movie. If the film portrayed me the way I was, if it portrayed our marriage the way it had been, if it was honest, that would be my payback.

As long as the movie was true, I'd be happy. Robert De Niro was the perfect actor to play Jake. There was a wonderful writer and director. What I had to do was make them see the truth. Millions of people would ultimately judge me based on what they saw on screen. And I wasn't going to let some actress pretending to be me blow Pete Savage on camera without a fight.

From that day on, I devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to the movie. Mardik Martin came down to Miami several more times. At his request, I prepared taped recollections of my years with Jake. Once, after I mailed a particularly long tape, he telephoned to say how helpful it had been. I felt like a child who'd just gotten a gold star from her teacher. Then De Niro called and said that he and a writer named Paul Schrader were going to the Caribbean to rewrite the screenplay. Pete was being taken out of the story completely and they were confident I'd be pleased with the end product.

Meanwhile, as work on the screenplay progressed, De Niro and I maintained contact. One time when I was in New York, Bobby took me to lunch and told me a little about his philosophy of acting. In order to play a character, he had to empathize with that person. At the time, I thought I understood what he was saying. Later though, I realized I hadn't grasped the scope of it at all. Bobby did more than empathize with Jake. He began to act like him, talk like him, even think like him.

One afternoon, I went to watch them work out together at Gramercy Gym. The screenplay required Bobby to be in the ring. For about a year, he had trained with Jake, learning fundamentals and sparring hundreds of rounds. Standing by the ring apron, watching them spar, was as strange a feeling as I'd ever known. Jake had trained Bobby to fight the way he'd fought as a young man. Right in front of my eyes, Jake number one and Jake number two were fighting each other.

Around the same time, my daughter Chris invited Bobby and me to her apartment for dinner. He hardly said anything the entire night. Mostly, he sat on the sofa and watched us talk. Chris kept saying, "You're in my house. Relax, take your shoes off, put your feet on the coffee table."

Bobby wouldn't let up. The whole time, he was very intense until, as the evening wore on, I realized he was imagining himself as Jake, spending time with his wife and daughter. That's who he'd become, and I began to think of him in those terms.

One night, the telephone rang. I picked up the receiver. And right away, I knew it was Jake because I heard low guttural sounds. Jake ruined his nose when he was fighting. As a result, he had trouble breathing. Before he spoke, either he took a deep breath or tried to drag air in through his nose. Whenever he called, before he said a word, I knew it was him.

So I said, "Jake?" And a voice answered, "No, it's Bobby." It was incredible. He'd mastered Jake's mannerisms to the point where, without even speaking, he sounded like Jake on the telephone.

Finally, just before filming began, I met Martin Scorsese for the first time. Chartoff-Winkler flew me to New York, and Bobby and Marty came to see me. We chatted a bit. Then Marty told me, "Vikki, the screenplay is finished. What we'd like now is to read it to you. Bobby will play Jake. I'll read all the other roles. Anytime something strikes you as wrong, whether it's a major inaccuracy, a minor change, something you don't like, I want you to interrupt us."

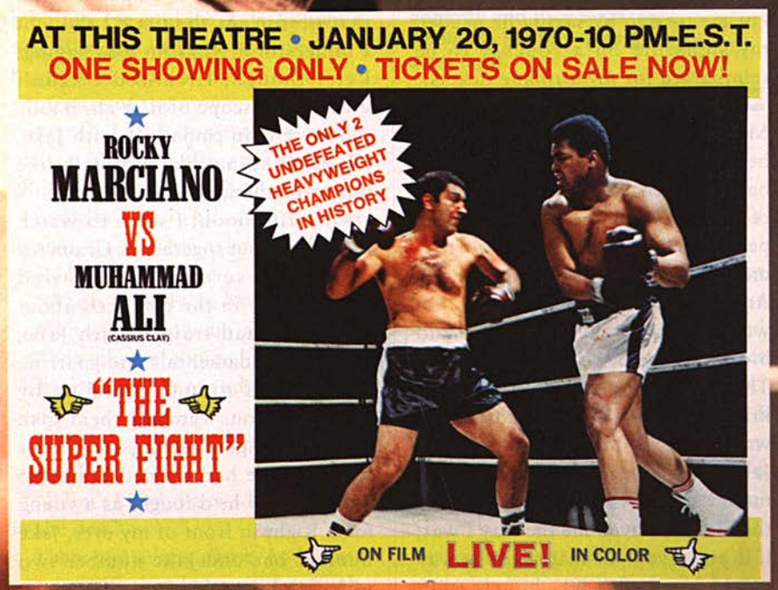
What a trip! They started reading, and I had a ball. Every now and then, Bobby would stop and ask, "How do you like that?" I'd answer "great" or "okay" or "maybe you should change it."

Overall, I was happy with what they read to me. It was true to Jake's life and our marriage. But I was painfully aware that changes might be made. There was no guarantee that I'd be happy with the end result.

A MATCH MADE IN HARDWARE

IN 1969, **ROCKY MARCIANO** AND **MUHAMMAD ALI** FACED OFF IN A FANTASY FIGHT LIKE NO OTHER

By **Don Stradley**



Rocky Marciano plowed forward into his opponent's chest and forced him back into the ropes. He pounded away with body blows, some landing against his rival's arms just like in the old days. The opponent, Muhammad Ali, braced himself and then fired back with his own punches.

But something was wrong.

"Cut the cameras!"

Marciano's hairpiece had come loose. It looked like a hunk of carpet that had been kicked up from a floorboard.

It was time for a break. Ali exhaled, letting his slight paunch flow over his beltline. Marciano fussed with his toupee. He'd lost weight for this, but The Rock couldn't grow back the hair he'd been losing since he retired from boxing 13 years earlier. The cheap wig would have to suffice, even if the playful Ali kept knocking it off.

It was August of 1969, and the two great heavyweights had been brought together for "The Super Fight," the brainchild of Murray Woroner. A radio station manager and budding film producer, Woroner had created a makeshift boxing arena in North Miami's Studio City, a rarely used complex built a few years earlier when Miami hoped to create its own movie industry. Not in peak condition – Marciano was in his 40s, and Ali, though only 27, had been inactive for two years – the fighters were going through the motions of boxing for a cut-rate camera crew. Over several clandestine sessions they would film approximately 70 one-minute rounds, giving Woroner enough footage that he could patch together something that looked like the ultimate fantasy fight. The real hook for the event, however, was the way Woroner would determine the winner. He'd utilize the NCR 315, a computer generally used by accounting firms for data processing. With refrigerator-sized modules and a central processor weighing more than 1,300 pounds, the bulky beast looked impressive but was quite primitive by today's standards. Still, it was Woroner's dream machine. As Prometheus brought fire to humanity, Woroner would bring the new computer age into the gritty world of professional boxing.

By surveying 250 sportswriters and boxing experts, and then feeding the collected information into the NCR 315, Woroner had calculated how a contest between Marciano and Ali might play out. The plan was to have the fighters look convincing in the ring, and then edit their performance so it matched the scenario belched out by the computer. The finished product would be shown for one night only in select locations at five dollars per customer. To incite ticket buyers, Woroner vowed to destroy the film immediately after showing it. »

A MATCH MADE IN HARDWARE

At the time, Marciano had been making money through speaking engagements; he was in the process of hiring comedy writers to create an act for him to use on the banquet circuit before Woroner contacted him. Ali, of course, was still scuffling with the government over his refusing military duty. Not sure if his career would ever resume, Ali agreed to take part in Woroner's production for roughly $10,000 and a percentage of the box office. He needed the money. Marciano was paid about the same.

Previously, Woroner concocted a tournament for radio where he used a Honeywell 4200 to pick the greatest heavyweight champion of all time. Marciano emerged victorious out of a field of 16. When Ali heard he'd been knocked out of the tourney early on by James J. Jeffries, he sued for defamation. Woroner smoothed things with Ali by proposing the Super Fight idea. The original plan involved Ali and Marciano simply posing for still photos. Using a primitive technique Woroner called "photomation," the pictures would be shown on television while the story of the bout would be printed on the screen. They met in January 1969 for a photo shoot, but Woroner suddenly felt the project should have a live action feel. That's what brought Ali, Marciano and the wig to Miami in August.

When the film was shown across 1,500 theaters on January 20, 1970, audiences lapped it up. Woroner had teased the press with tales of how Ali and Marciano had actually fought hard during filming; that some of the blood on Marciano's face was real, not makeup; and that Ali had demanded an additional $2,000 because Marciano was being too rough. Woroner also baited reporters by saying many possible endings had been filmed, but he wouldn't hint at the chosen finish. With the film canisters allegedly protected by armed and bonded couriers, the Super Fight was shuttled into theaters under supreme secrecy.

What spectators saw was a typical Marciano fight, with Ali winning the early rounds and the bleeding Marciano coming back to score a knockout in the 13th. For all of his computer talk, Woroner had basically rehashed the Marciano-Walcott bout of 1952. Ali, watching in Philadelphia's Stanley Theater, sat in disbelief. The computer, Ali said, had probably been made in Alabama and designed by white men.

The NCR 315 computer that would "determine the winner" of the bout.

The film was a curiosity, a prolonged mime act that seems not of its time nor any other. Robert Lipsyte of The New York Times reported, "All punches sounded alike – a hollow, fleshless thud. And there was no sense of impact... no blows actually seemed to land." Strangest of all was the steady roar of a crowd, though there was no ringside audience. The effect was dreamlike, ghostly. "It's like they've been abducted by aliens," said Marciano biographer Mike Stanton in a 2018 public radio interview. "And they're fighting in some, you know, spaceship."

Ali and Marciano had become friendly during their time together in Miami. Ali even suggested they do a tour of America's cities, showing the racially divided country that a Black man and a white man could get along. Unfortunately, Marciano was killed in a plane crash shortly after he and Ali had done their bit for Woroner. Ali attended Marciano's funeral and forever praised him as a great champion who had put a few bruises on him during their filming. He had less kind words for Woroner, dismissing the computer fight as "a Hollywood fake" and claiming that Woroner never paid him.

Actually, Ali wasn't likely to get paid.

"Woroner was destitute," said Mike DeLisa, who directed a 2005 documentary on the infamous computer fight as part of a double disc DVD release. "He didn't make money on the computer fight because the theater owners kept telling him there was no audience, though all reports said the theaters were sold out. There was nothing he could do. Even if he'd wanted to pay Ali, he couldn't."

Woroner was simply no match for crafty theater owners who had years of experience when it came to ripping off independent filmmakers.

Ali was not only stiffed by Woroner, but he felt the computer fight had hurt his image. He wrote in his autobiography, "... some people thought it was real. Some sat stone-still, some booed and yelled, some cried ... I felt like I had disappointed millions all over the world. It left me ashamed of what I had been doing." Indeed, various newspapers verified that many audience members seemed unsure of what they were watching. Some thought it was actually a legit contest that had been filmed undercover. A reporter at a theater in Ali's hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, noted, "Few ... seemed to realize that the result was only the product of a computer programmer's imagination."

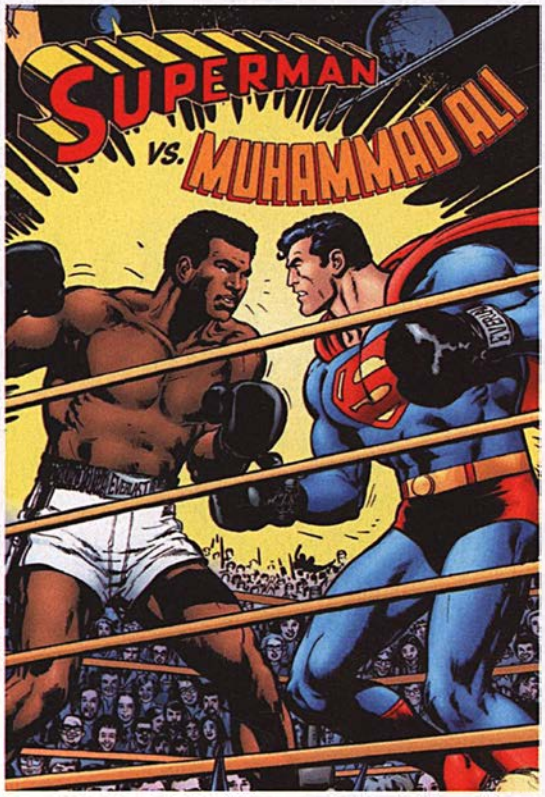
The big question was whether Woroner had simply catered to a white audience and staged a kind of wish-fulfillment event, one where

the great white champion of the 1950s smashed the angry Black man of the 1960s, where the former G.I. beat the draft-dodger. It was also suggested that Woroner had used the "Marciano by knockout" ending for sentimental reasons since Marciano had just died. Woroner always maintained that the computer had picked Marciano. Yet Ali questioned the actual usage of the NCR 315. "There was no computer telling us what to do," he wrote.

Indeed, some have speculated that Woroner simply plotted the scenario with help from one or two boxing experts, but part of the reason he went broke was the costly use of the computer. Another planned computer fight with Sugar Ray Robinson and Nino Benvenuti was scrapped because Woroner simply had no money to fund such projects.

There also has been much conjecture as to how much the fighters knew. Woroner supposedly told them that he didn't know how the NCR 315 would call the fight, so he wanted to shoot every possible ending. According to DeLisa, Woroner knew Marciano was going to win, but told no one. Though many believed that Marciano died without knowing how the movie turned out, his family assured one of his biographers, Everett Skehan, that Woroner had told Marciano that he'd win in the 13th. It's highly possible that Marciano only agreed to take part because he knew from the beginning that he was the winner, and that the various endings were filmed to string Ali along.

The multiple endings led to a rumor that Ali was victorious in showings overseas, which DeLisa derides as "absolute myth." The urban legend that Woroner had used different endings depending on what city the movie was being shown in was equally unfounded. An additional anecdote was that the NCR 315 was exposed as less than reliable. Prior to Joe Frazier bombing out Bob Foster in two rounds, Woroner's favorite machine had allegedly selected Foster to win in six. Regardless, the 1969-1970 period was an era of new technical marvels, including the Boeing 747 "jumbo jet" and American astronauts on the moon. A computer picking the winner of a fight was plausible, which gave the Super Fight no less schlocky appeal than computer dating, which was hot back then, too.



If one heavyweight was going to defeat Superman, it was Muhammad Ali.

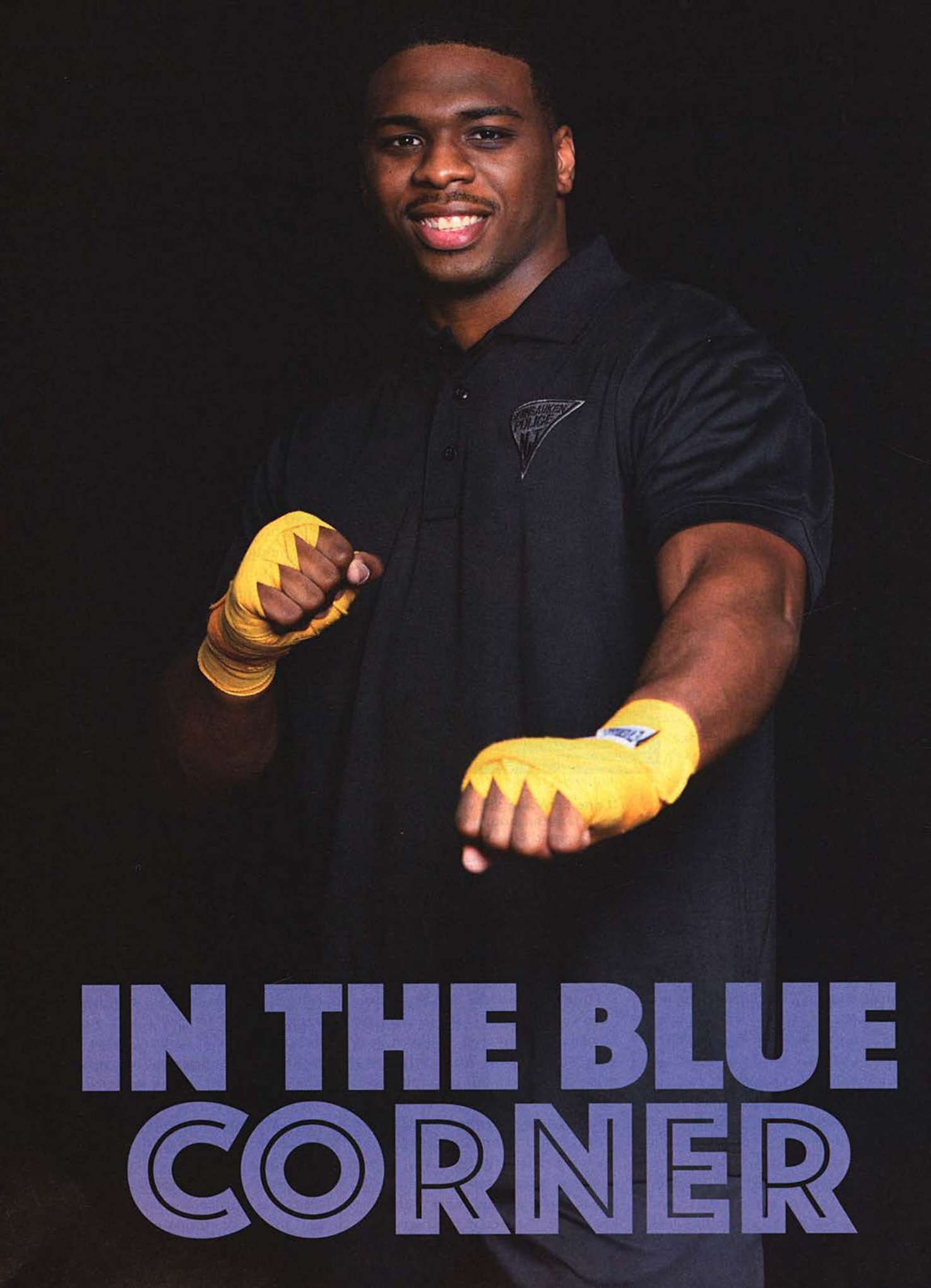
How big was the Ali-Marciano computer fight? Well, major newspapers covered it like a real bout, and the New York Daily News printed a nearly full-page photo of Ali on the canvas. Some journalists called it a fiasco aimed at a gullible public, and others praised it as artistic and innovative, but all of the day's top writers reported on it. The Super Fight gained more publicity later in 1970 when it aired on ABC's Wide World of Sports, and actually ended up back in theaters for a while, sometimes on the bottom end of a double feature. In Sacramento, it spent part of the summer in an adult movie house, playing on bills with such X-rated fare as Hard Core Copenhagen 1970.

Woroner gradually built a reputation as a producer of educational and training films. He remained a cultish figure in Miami, a hustler, to be sure, but as DeLisa is quick to say, "not in the pejorative sense." He died in 1979 at 53.

"Woroner was a creative mind," said DeLisa. "He saw potential with this, but he also had a vision of what would make it interesting for fight fans, and he put a little science behind it. He got this thing done, and though he didn't make money, in some ways he paved the way for all of the computer games that came later. Just look at all the games that involve fantasy fights."

Fifty years after it played in theaters, the computer fight lives in the far-flung corners of YouTube. Considering how it has been mocked over the years, it actually looks better than you'd think. It's intriguing just to see Ali and Marciano in a ring together. In fact, there are moments late in the "fight" that seem strangely intense. In 2005, when Woroner's movie was shown in a small Boston theater to celebrate the DVD release, the little audience howled as if watching a genuine slugfest. No matter how he did it, Woroner created something unique.

It wasn't Ali's last imaginary fight, however. In 1978, DC Comics put out a special edition where Ali tangled with Superman. In that one, The Man of Steel was stripped of his powers and lost to Ali by KO. Later, the two teamed up to save the world. In eight years, Ali had gone from being Marciano's victim to Superman's collaborator. Despite Ali's concerns, Woroner's computer hadn't hurt his image all that much.



IN THE BLUE CORNER

a chance."

The Hatchet, however, wanted to see the same gleam in his son's eye that he possessed. He would watch his son's workouts. He would critique his movement and stress fundamentals. Yet those instructions seemed to go in one ear and out the other.

So Charles Sr. had an interesting way of finding out if his son had what it took: He put Bam in with respected Philly pros Jesse Hart, Hank Lundy and Eddie Chambers. Out of respect for The Hatchet, they asked him if he just wanted them to box Bam.

"I told them the hell with me being cool; I wanted them to spank his ass," Charles Sr. said, laughing. "They went out there and did what I asked them to do. Charles held his own. That told me something. He held his own and came back. I saw what I was working with. I started to see me in him.

"I needed to see a part that was just not coming out of him yet. When it was me, it always existed, and that's that animalistic part that I always had. I wanted to see that killer instinct. This trainer-father thing wasn't easy.

"There were times when I had to get on him. You have to separate being his trainer and being his father. That's a patience thing; I had to develop patience. I wanted him to be like me. Charles would look at me sometimes and just say, 'Dad, you gotta calm down when you're working with me.' It reached a point where I had to get on myself about it. I told him the path has already been paved. All he has to do is walk it."

It was the other path that no one saw coming – not even Charles Jr.

He attended Rowan University for a couple of years, then took up economics at Ashford University online. He has a year remaining to complete his bachelor's degree. When he was 22, he took the New Jersey law enforcement exam. His maternal aunt is a 17-year Philadelphia police officer who was like an older sister to Bam growing up.

Charles Jr. liked the steady pay and he liked the aspect of helping people. The New Jersey law enforcement exam applies to a variety of positions, from prison guards to being a police officer. At 22, he landed a job as a prison guard at Camden County jail. It baptized him into a different world.

"I dealt with everyone – murderers, drug dealers. I got thrown right in, and that was very good for me, because I saw a lot of things close up," Charles Jr. said. "I got tested a few times. Sometimes I had to deal with some things. I had a sergeant there who told me he liked how I dealt with situations. He also gave me great advice: Be respectful to them and the prisoners would be respectful to me."

In November 2018, Brewer Jr. got a certified letter informing him that he was eligible for the Pennsauken police department. He'd adjusted to the prison job and liked it, but he was urged by his family to respond. His fiancée is also a Pennsauken police officer.

So he took the job.

Two years have gone by, and Bam finds himself in a far more polarized society than when he entered the force.

His sphere, like every cop in America, changed on May 25, 2020. That's when George Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American man, was killed in Minneapolis while being arrested for allegedly using a counterfeit $20 bill.

Video of the arrest went viral, showing Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, kneeling on Floyd's neck for several minutes as Floyd, handcuffed and lying on his stomach, repeatedly said he couldn't breathe.

"I would stop something being done by another cop, if I saw something wrong," Bam said. "I will say being a police officer recently, it's a lot different. When I grew up, we looked up to the cops. We knew the cops were there for our protection.

Charles Jr. is now benefiting from his father's championship experience.

"Today, it's not that way. It used to be you would wear your hat or your police shirt. You used to be proud to be a police officer. It was a position of high stature. Obviously, not anymore. There is a difference in the pride of being a police officer. But I'm very proud of what I do."

Charles Jr. gets approached by former high school classmates asking why he became a cop.

"I tell them that I will be Black a lot longer than I will be a cop, and I understand what it's like, because when I'm not in uniform, I don't want to say that I have the same fears," Bam said. "Sometimes in my culture there are certain things embedded. There are certain ideas, certain thoughts towards authority, towards your doctor, towards your teacher.

"It's in the movies, it's in the music. It's all around, in everything all of the time. I've been stopped; I've been stopped in my own community. My own personal experiences have been positive. I was stopped one time with five Black kids in the car, driving to go play ball and we were speeding. The cop let us go.

All of my experiences have been positive, but I do see and understand the other side. I see why people are angry."

Sophia Brewer can't win. She was terrified each time her husband fought and now has it twofold with her oldest being a cop on top of a fighter.

Bam himself admits that things are far different than they were two years ago. But he has a solution to a national problem: Do something about it with dialogue and action.

"I'm more concerned today every time I put the uniform on, because I do feel – even though I mind my own business and don't know anyone's prior intentions – that if there was a target on my back before, it's times 100 now," Bam said. "Every car stop, no matter what, since I'm an African-American cop and pull someone over who's Black and don't let them go, I am now a complete traitor if I give them a ticket.

"I've actually had people tell me, 'You're giving me this ticket and you're Black!' I tell them, 'I pull over anyone if they're speeding or blowing a red light or stop sign.' I don't care what race you are; I'm pulling them over. I also understand the other side of it and I will let someone go.

"Moving forward, we have to bridge the gap between communities and the police. I think it's the police officer and the department's responsibility to bridge that gap, because no one is going to come up and speak to a police officer. Not today.

"If you don't like the system, you should do something about it. If you don't like how cops are, become a cop. We need more young Black people to get into law enforcement. That's the easiest way to change it."

Charles Jr. said he still wants to be a police officer five years from now, but he admits boxing has been a quiet journey he would like to take.

"I would love to be a world champion. I would love to have the opportunities my dad had. And when people hear the name Charles Brewer, I want them to think of Charles Brewer Jr.," he said, laughing. "I'm proud to have my dad in my corner. I trust him. He's done it – and done it to the highest level. I just have to do what he tells me to do and I think I'm going to be all right."

Joseph Santoliquito is an award-winning sportswriter who has been working for Ring Magazine/RingTV.com since October 1997 and is the president of the Boxing Writers Association of America. He can be followed on Twitter @JSantoliquito.

THE NEXT GENERATION

THE STARS OF WOMEN'S BOXING HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, BUT A NEW WAVE OF TALENT IS ALREADY ON THE WAY

By **Thomas Gerbasi**

One glance at The Ring's new women's divisional and pound-for-pound rankings on RingTV.com and it's clear that the sport has finally reached its golden age, with many of the boxers on these lists becoming household names (at least in boxing households). But a closer look shows that beyond fighters like Claressa Shields, Katie Taylor, Cecilia Braekhus and Jessica McCaskill, there's a new generation of competitors entering these rankings, building their resumes and setting the stage for the time when they make their run at becoming the face of the sport.

Here are 10 who just might have the right stuff to take over the game when their opportunity comes.

Who will succeed the likes of (top to bottom) Claressa Shields, Katie Taylor, Cecilia Braekhus and Jessica McCaskill?

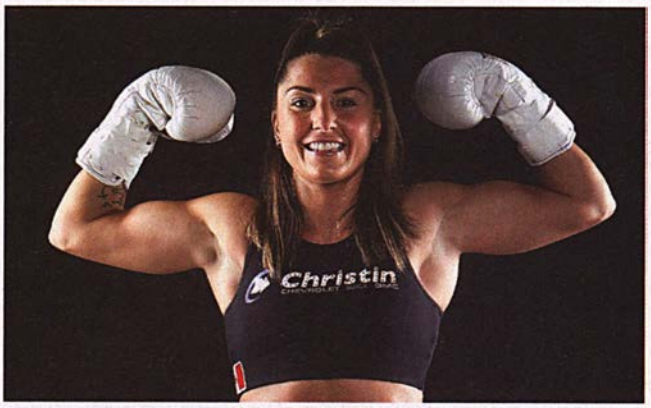
(Records as of October 19, 2020)

ALYCIA BAUMGARDNER (9-1, 6 KOS)

The Ring's 2018 Prospect of the Year, Ohio's Baumgardner earned that award thanks to the dynamite in her gloves that has ended all six of her knockout wins in the first round. Yes, the level of competition has been spotty at best, but in her lone loss – a split decision against Christina Linardatou in July 2018 – Baumgardner proved that she can go the distance and arguably beat a fighter who became the WBO 140-pound titleholder in her next fight. Unbeaten in three fights since, Baumgardner will be out for a bit thanks to knee surgery, but expect her to make some noise when she returns.

CHANTELLE CAMERON (13-0, 7 KOS)

The first of three British boxers on this list, Northampton's Cameron is the second of them to win a world title, having shut out unbeaten Brazilian Adriana dos Santos Araujo for the vacant WBC 140-pound belt in October. Cameron has a strong amateur pedigree, earning several titles while facing the likes of Katie Taylor, Rose Volante and Estelle Mossely. And while her pro career stalled for a bit early on, prompting a split from Cyclone Promotions and trainer Shane McGuigan, linking up with Jamie Moore has helped her in the ring and fighting under the MTK Global banner should give her the platform for her talents both at home and abroad.



KIM CLAVEL (12-0, 2 KOS)

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, Montreal's Clavel put her career on hold to return to nursing and aiding elderly patients struck by the deadly virus. That selfless act put Clavel on the world map and earned her the Pat Tillman Award for Service at the 2020 ESPYs. Once fans got introduced to the junior flyweight's story, they wanted to see her fight, and she rose to the occasion with a win over previously unbeaten Natalie Gonzalez in her Las Vegas debut on ESPN in July. And yes, the story is a great one, but Clavel can fight. And she's willing to go in tough as well, with only one of her 12 opponents having a losing record, a rarity in women's boxing. Put it all together and Clavel can become the most successful woman to emerge from Canada since Jelena Mrdjenovich.

TERRI HARPER (10-0-1, 5 KOS)

If it seems like Harper came out of nowhere in the last couple years, she would be the first to agree. With an amateur career lasting just 17 fights, paling in comparison to those of fellow Brits Savannah Marshall and Chantelle Cameron, Harper entered the pro ranks with little fanfare in late 2017. But less than two years later, she was beating respected veteran Viviane Obenauf. Three months after that, she took Eva Wahlstrom's WBC belt with little trouble. But it was an action-packed draw with Natasha Jonas in August 2020 that put Harper on the map in the middle of the pandemic. Add in a budding rivalry with Mikaela Mayer, and Ms. Harper will be quite busy and in the public eye through 2021 and beyond.

SENIESA ESTRADA (19-0, 8 KOS)

Ranked fifth in the world by The Ring at 108 pounds, Los Angeles' Estrada has been living up to all the hype since winning the Prospect of the Year award in 2016, and in her last two bouts, "Superbad" has gotten even more attention as she closes in on a junior flyweight title fight. First, she settled a score with former Olympian Marlen Esparza in November 2019, winning a nine-round technical decision. And while her lone 2020 appearance was talked about more for overmatched Miranda Adkins being in there with the experienced Estrada, the 28-year-old Californian did what you do with overmatched opponents, which is end the fight in seven seconds with a highlight-reel flourish.

SAVANNAH MARSHALL (8-0, 6 KOS)

Marshall could sit on the sidelines or feast on nobodies for as long as she wanted, and the middleweight from Hartlepool, England, could still summon a superfight with a snap of her fingers. But the last (and only) woman to beat Claressa Shields when the two were amateurs is looking to make her own name in the sport. After racing out to an 8-0 record, the hard-hitting Marshall was slated to face Hannah Rankin for the vacant WBO middleweight title on October 17, but that didn't happen after Marshall's trainer, Peter Fury, tested positive for coronavirus. A new date of October 31 was confirmed as we went to press. If Marshall wins, a matchup with Shields could be the biggest fight in women's boxing.

MIKAELA MAYER (13-0, 5 KOS)

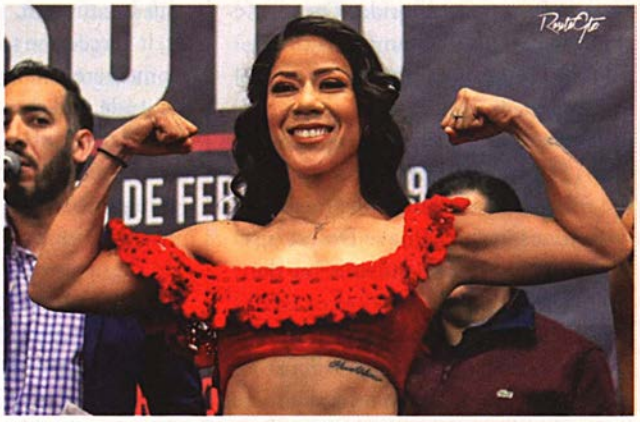
Some would say that Mayer doesn't belong on a list like this, that she's already made it to the "star" level in the sport, and I wouldn't argue too hard with such folks. I do believe once the 2016 United States Olympian and 2018 Prospect of the Year gets a world title, things will move at such a pace that she may end up as the face of the sport before too long. She's got the talent, she's got the marketability, she knows the game in and out of the ring, and she's got plenty of dance partners from 130-140 pounds. Plus, with her first world title fight against Ewa Brodnicka scheduled for October 31, Mayer may be a champion by the time you read this. Then the fun really begins.

ADELAIDA RUIZ (9-0, 4 KOS)

The wild card of this group is clearly Los Angeles' Ruiz. A vicious puncher with an exciting style, a crazy backstory and the quiet charisma that has already garnered her a cult fan following, "La Cobra" could become a West Coast sensation. But she has to fight. And at press time, she hasn't been in the ring since October 2019, which isn't good for a 32-year-old prospect. COVID-19 shutting down club shows hasn't helped matters, but if Ruiz signs with a big promoter or boxing gets somewhat back to normal in 2021, don't be surprised if we're hearing more from her very soon.

ESTELLE MOSSELY (7-0, 1 KOS)

Just seven fights into her pro career and Mossely is already a star in her native France, and that's no surprise. The 28-year-old is a decorated amateur with a 2016 Olympic gold medal in her trophy case and the IBO lightweight belt she earned in June 2019 with a victory over Lucy Wildheart. Add in her marriage to heavyweight prospect (and fellow Olympic gold medalist) Tony Yoka, and you know the tabloids are loving her. And while giving birth to her second child slowed her momentum, Mossely returned to the ring in September (on the undercard of her husband's first-round stoppage of Johann Duhaupas) with a shutout decision over Aurelie Froment, putting her in the thick of the lightweight title race heading into 2021.



SULEM URBINA (12-0, 2 KOS)

If anyone hated the COVID-19 pandemic more than most, it was probably Sulem Urbina. After making her long-awaited United States debut in February with a shutout of veteran Noemi Bosques, the Mexico native was apparently a signature away from a contract with Golden Boy Promotions before the virus shut the world down. Thankfully, once everything started opening up again, the talented and social media-savvy Urbina got her contract and the biggest fight of her career against Marlen Esparza, which at press time was scheduled for October 30. With a win on that DAZN-televised card, Urbina would become the mandatory challenger for the WBC flyweight title. Call it better late than never for the 30-year-old.

WORLD BEAT

U.K.

BY GARETH A DAVIES

If a fighter wanted to get the most out of the pandemic lockdown, there were fewer better places than in the company of the boxing legend and future Hall of Famer Roy Jones Jr. We, as aficionados of the noble art, cannot fail to purr looking back on the spectacular athleticism and almost unparalleled vision Roy possessed – like a coiled snake in the ring – a couple of decades ago when he truly was great and arguably No. 1 pound-for-pound. We will all, moreover, rubberneck at his return against Mike Tyson in an "exhibition bout." But for Chris Eubank Jr., lockdown was a lesson in boxing life as the British fighter honed his ring craft under Jones at the American's farm in Pensacola, Florida. The result is that after five months there, Eubank feels honed into a new shape as a boxer.

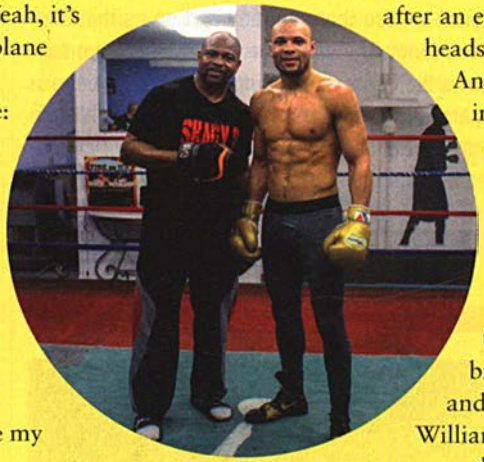
Previously "trained" by his father, Chris Sr., the 31-year-old told me the tale of his serendipitous meeting with Jones in the Mojave Desert just as the coronavirus pandemic hit the United States.

"I was in Vegas training, living the life. I own an apartment there," explained Eubank, who attended high school in Las Vegas for two years after his father had placed him and his brother there to form part of their education. "A friend of mine called Kevin Newman had a fight at a casino called Sam's Town, off the strip. Roy was in his corner. I went there to support Kevin and watch him fight.

"After the fight, I got a chance to talk to Roy for five minutes. I found out he had this gym in Pensacola. I asked him a couple of things about training. That was it; we went our separate ways. I didn't think about going to train with Roy."

Eubank had been training at the Mayweather Boxing Club. But then it closed as the city began to shut down. Eubank pondered going home to the U.K. Or staying ... "Then it hit me: Roy Jones. I called my dad and said to him, 'Can you see if you can get Roy to allow me to come and train with him?' He said, 'Sure, that's a great idea.' A few hours later, he called and said, 'Yeah, it's done.' I got on a plane the next day."

Eubank told me: "I'm not going to say coronavirus is a blessing, because it's been devastating to so many people. But because of it, it forced me to come here, change my attitude and the way I think about boxing. I'm not going into fights just wanting to rip these guys' heads off. Instead of being just fit and strong, now I'm setting up game plans and strategies. My boxing IQ has gone up and I'm ready to show that. Roy has forced me to use it."



Eubank has developed a strong bond with legendary four-weight ruler Roy Jones Jr.

Eubank says he "never dreamed" he would be in this situation of being trained by one of the best ever, "somebody I looked up to and idolized throughout my career and as a kid." It has meant that Eubank has even found himself sparring with Jones, helping him to get in shape for the exhibition fight with Tyson.

Don't be surprised to see Eubank carrying the bucket in the corner or even getting a spot on the card. It has been talked about behind the scenes.

★★★★

Elsewhere in the U.K., regular boxing shows – all behind closed doors – have continued with the major promoters and some of the small hall organizers. Under Frank Warren's banner, heavyweights Joe Joyce and Daniel Dubois kept up their winning ways ahead of their re-re-rescheduled November 28 showdown, while Welshman Liam Williams worked with alacrity after an early clash of heads to knock out Andrew Robinson in 88 seconds and retain his British middleweight crown.

It was a left hook like a sharp shovel to the body that broke Robinson and felled him after Williams attacked with the frightening vigor and viciousness that is the trademark of the fighter from the Rhondda Valley, from where Jimmy Wilde, the "Ghost With The Hammer In His Hand" and one of the greatest flyweights in history, hailed.

"The Machine" (Williams) immediately called out Demetrius Andrade to honor his obligation to defend the WBO middleweight title against him. "I'm the mandatory challenger, so it is a case of when and where," Williams said. "I'll fight Andrade here, I'll fight there, I'll fight him anywhere. They need to start enforcing these situations with mandatory challengers, I believe, and I am pushing for it because I want my opportunity and I want it next." Williams' tilt at the WBO title

has been slowed by the COVID-19 outbreak, but the Welshman, who has 18 knockouts from his 23 career victories, will not give up the chase.

Under Eddie Hearn's Matchroom Boxing stable, Chantelle Cameron overcame her nerves to be crowned the new WBC junior welterweight beltholder with a win over Brazilian Adriana Araujo by landslide scores of 100-90 on the judges' cards.

The 29-year-old, who remains unbeaten in 13 fights, exerted utter control over her experienced Brazilian opponent, a London 2012 Olympic Games bronze medalist, who had failed to make weight. The Brazilian, known as "Pitbull," was five pounds over the 140 limit.

On the same card, rising light heavyweight Joshua Buatsi had the first "gut check" of his career, overcoming a tough challenge and a thumb in the eye early in the contest against previously undefeated Marko Calic before stopping the Croatian in the seventh round. "He pushed me all the way, so credit to him," said Buatsi, who finished ruthlessly once he had Calic hurt. "It was a long time out, but I'm glad to be back and earn another victory."

Top Rank and MTK Global-promoted Josh Taylor was also impressive against IBF mandatory challenger Apinun Khongsong. The "Tartan Tornado" crippled Khongsong with a body shot in the opening round – a delight for new trainer Ben Davison, who had said how dangerous he believed the Thai fighter would be with his heavy-handedness. But Taylor put in a terrific shift defending his Ring, IBF and WBA junior welterweight titles and is now in position – under Las Vegas-based promoter Bob Arum – for an undisputed 140-pound blockbuster fight with Jose Ramirez, holder of the other two divisional belts, presumably when crowds are allowed into arenas again. Arum also told me that Edinburgh is firmly under consideration "as long as the numbers make sense." Taylor moved to 17-0 in his career.

Davison told me: "I believe Josh will get more credit for this victory later on, because the Thai fighter will go on and knock some very big names out. He was a very, very dangerous opponent."

Certainly Taylor, 29, continues to impress. His last five opponents have had a combined record of 110 wins and one loss between them. Undisputed is the title the fighter from the fishing village of Prestonpans now craves. "One hundred percent, I want Ramirez next. He's a very good champion, unbeaten like myself, hungry, on top of his game. I want that fight as soon as possible," said a triumphant Taylor. "To be honest, I would rather wait until the fans are back for that fight. It's a huge fight. It's one of the biggest fights at the minute for all the belts."

Gareth A Davies is Boxing Correspondent for the London Telegraph.

JAPAN

BY YURIKO MIYATA

Forty hours before Jose Zepeda and Ivan Baranchyk would dig deeper and deeper in a Las Vegas ring situated in the MGM Grand's Bubble, two junior lightweight veterans traded knockdowns 5,600 miles away in Japan to prove worthy of being world-ranked. The 10-round contest was between Kenichi Ogawa (25-1-1, 18 KOs), rated No. 3 by the IBF, and Kazuhiro Nishitani (21-5-1, 12 KOs), No. 7 by the same organization. It was the main event of the 594th episode of Dynamic Glove, the long-running boxing series promoted by Teiken with Nippon TV, on October 2 at Korakuen Hall in Tokyo.

The fight, which ended in a unanimous decision for Ogawa, was of course not as dramatic as Zepeda-Baranchyk, but it was a worthy matchup. Ogawa and Nishitani had not faced a domestic rival for more than three years. Even if it was the current COVID-19 travel restrictions on foreign boxers that helped to make this match happen, it was the best way for both to prove who was worthier of representing the country going toward an eventual shot at IBF titleholder Joseph Diaz Jr.

"I really want to get my waist wrapped with the red-colored belt of the IBF. I would die for it," Ogawa said in a pre-fight interview on Nippon TV. He briefly held that belt after winning a split decision over Tevin Farmer in December 2017 but was soon stripped of it following a positive test result for a banned substance. Ogawa originally planned for a direct rematch with Joe Noynay this spring after a technical decision draw against the Pinoy last December, however it was canceled due to the pandemic. As it got difficult to invite Noynay to Japan, Ogawa took the offer to fight Nishitani, who had been on a win streak since earning the national lightweight title with an upset eighth-round TKO over hard-hitting Shuhei Tsuchiya in 2017.

Ogawa set out with sharp jabs from the first round. But when Ogawa added pressure behind his jab in the third round, it was Nishitani who got the better of his fellow veteran with a well-timed left uppercut that sent Ogawa to the canvas. Ogawa beat the count on very unsteady legs and had to clinch to survive until the bell. The next round, Nishitani caught Ogawa with a solid right hand and tried to finish the fight. Ogawa, forced to rally, countered with a right to floor Nishitani and even the score. The fight settled into a more technical mode from that point on. While Ogawa has a lethal weapon in his right hand, Nishitani had the awkward timing, angles and rhythm to trouble him. Ogawa suffered a cut on the right eyelid in the seventh round and made the choice to keep his distance from Nishitani, who was chasing harder. Ogawa's hit-and-move tactics worked well in later rounds to secure a score of 97-93 by all three judges.

"I have to shut my big mouth with that performance today. It was all about my inadequacy," Ogawa, who

turns 32 in February, said during his post-fight interview. "He had an awkward style and good eyes to poke my openings. But let me be proud of myself only in that I stuck in there and won the fight in the end. I will focus more on my goal and improve myself to get there."

PHILIPPINES

BY RYAN SONGALIA

Though John Riel Casimero has not gotten the sort of attention Manny Pacquiao, Nonito Donaire or even Donnie Nietes have in their careers, those in the know could tell that all the three-division beltholder needed was an audience and an opportunity.

Still, no one could have expected how he'd use his time in that spotlight in his U.S. TV debut on September 26. Moments after stopping the previously unbeaten Duke Micah in three rounds on the Charlo brothers' doubleheader pay-per-view in Connecticut, Casimero dropped to the floor and banged out a set of one-armed push-ups to celebrate.

Then, during post-fight media interviews, Casimero turned his attention to Naoya Inoue, the Ring Magazine/WBA/IBF bantamweight champ whom Casimero was supposed to unify against before the pandemic nixed the bout. "You're no monster; you're a Japanese turtle!" said Casimero (30-4, 21 knockouts) in a diatribe littered with F-bombs.

"It's absolutely who he is. That's all natural; that's not staged," said MP Promotions President Sean Gibbons.

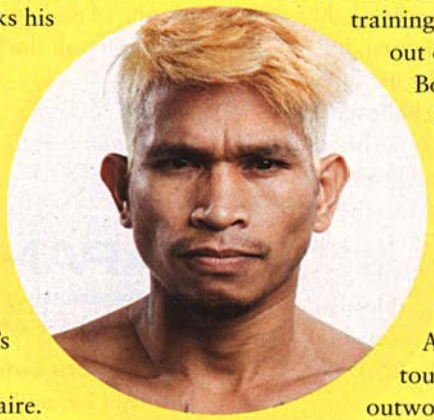
It was in stark contrast to Pacquiao's typical refrain of "It's up to my promoter" when contemplating his next opponent. And it's nothing new. After Casimero avenged his defeat to Amnat Ruenroeng with a fourth-round knockout in 2016, Casimero stood over him and stuck his tongue out. Then, after he knocked out Zolani Tete last year to win the WBO bantamweight title, which he currently holds, Casimero immediately took aim at the pound-for-pound-rated Inoue.

In the Philippines, where even dominant athletes are expected to outwardly exude humility and self-assuredness is among the greatest personal offenses, Casimero stands out.

"It's not a disrespect. It's more like he has no respect," said Philippine-based columnist Joaquin "Quinito" Henson. Henson, who has covered virtually all of the country's top athletes in recent decades, says that not even the "Bad Boy from Dadiangas," Rolando Navarrete, could match Casimero's attitude. But he does worry that it could be off-putting to some Filipino fans.

"The way he mocks his opponents, the way he called out Inoue, I've never seen a Filipino fighter do that, ever," said Henson. "We're all known to be very mild-mannered, very sporting, very gentlemanlike – that's because of Pacquiao and Elorde and Donaire. But this guy is really different.

"But one thing is for sure: The guy is a warrior inside the ring."



Casimero is a totally different package from his predecessors.

Casimero has taken the hard road to becoming one of the country's most accomplished champions, frequently fighting away from home and winning titles at 108, 112 and 118 pounds outside the Philippines.

Gibbons says the biggest fight they could make is still the Inoue fight, but if that doesn't come to fruition, they'd take a fight with Guillermo Rigondeaux or possibly move up to 122 pounds to face Luis Nery for his WBC belt.

"Casimero made a hit. He's an A-side; he's not an opponent. He can come in and command a date himself, pick a proper opponent and end up headlining a Showtime card," said Gibbons, who wants to see Casimero back in the ring in the first quarter of 2021.

Perhaps it's time to start calling Casimero "The Bad Boy from Ormoc City."

Meanwhile on the West Coast, another MP Promotions fighter, Mark Magsayo, made his return to the ring on October 3 after 13 months off, scoring a 10-round split decision over the tough Rigoberto Hermosillo in a PBC on Fox Sport 1 main event. Two judges scored the fight for Magsayo (21-0, 14 KOs), one by a 96-94 tally, the other by a far-too-wide 100-90. The third saw it for Hermosillo with a 96-94 score.

It was an uneven performance for the 25-year-old featherweight from Bohol province, who was fighting for the first time since he began training with Freddie Roach out of the Wild Card Boxing Club. While Magsayo was the sharper of the two, landing the flashier punches and stunning Hermosillo in Round 1, the Los Angeles local was tough and determined, outworking Magsayo later in the fight.

Another former ALA Promotions fighter, Donnie Nietes, looks set to return to the ring in the not-so-distant future.

The 38-year-old Nietes, who has won titles in four divisions, from 105 to 115 pounds, including the Ring Magazine junior flyweight title, has signed with MTK Global and D4G Promotions, it was announced on October 2. Nietes has not fought since New Year's Eve of 2018, after which he opted to vacate the WBO junior bantamweight title instead of facing compatriot Aston Palicte in a mandatory defense.

"The journey has been wonderful and I will forever cherish how I worked hard in building my successful career," said Nietes. "I'm not done yet, and I am now hoping to get a fight with (Juan Francisco) Estrada, (Srisaket Sor) Rungvisai and 'Chocolatito' (Roman Gonzalez)."

SOUTH AFRICA

BY DROEKS MALAN

The wheels are slowly starting to turn for South African boxing. October saw the return of live action when Golden Gloves Promotions staged a tournament with no audience present, and there are big plans afoot for South African cruiserweight contenders Kevin Lerena and Thabiso Mchunu on the international front.

★★★★

The IBF has called upon Lerena and unbeaten Jai Opetaia of Australia to enter negotiations for an eliminator to determine the No. 1 spot and mandatory challenger for Ring champion Mairis Briedis.

It is a fight that promoter Rodney Berman of Golden Gloves is keen to bring to South Africa: "The only way that Kevin will go to Australia is if they come up with a purse that is just too good to turn down. Opetaia has an excellent record but he hasn't faced the opponents that Kevin has."

The Aussie, who is a southpaw like Lerena, does indeed have a glossy 19-0 record with 15 knockouts. All his fights, barring two early outings in Mexico and Samoa, have been at home. In his last fight in November of 2019, he stopped former title challenger Mark Flanagan in eight rounds. Flanagan went the distance in a challenge of then-WBA titlist Denis Lebedev. That should be an indication that Opetaia has respectable power.

The 25-year-old Australian has a height and reach advantage over Lerena and is a calculated boxer with quick feet and hands who likes to use the perimeter of the ring, waiting for the opening to deliver a cracking straight left.

The fight will certainly present an interesting blend of styles and should deliver some good action.

Still, there are some hurdles to overcome, one of them being travel restrictions. The IBF does not allow fighters earmarked for an eliminator to engage in interim bouts but has granted an exception in this case, both being allowed a fight before engaging in the eliminator. Opetaia was scheduled at press time to face Benjamin Kelleher on October 22 in Australia, but there is not a suitable local opponent available for Lerena.

★★★★

Then there is Mchunu, who resurrected his career last December by scoring a comfortable decision over Lebedev in Russia.

The WBC has ordered a final eliminator between Mchunu and old foe Olanrewaju Durodola, with the winner to challenge incumbent titleholder Ilunga Makabu. DiBella Entertainment has won the rights to stage the fight, and now it is up to them to hammer out the details and hope that international travel restrictions do not get in the way.

Mchunu and Durodola met in 2014, with the South African winning a comfortable decision. Both have had their ups and downs since, but it looks like a very winnable fight for Mchunu. Trainer Sean Smith is not looking past Durodola, though: "He is one of those guys who is a bit of a danger dog. He is strong, and on a good night he has beaten some good names. He is always in a good fight. He comes to fight."

If Mchunu-Durodola II is not exactly filled with intrigue, the possibility of Mchunu challenging Makabu, should he win, definitely is.

Mchunu and Makabu, a South African-based Congolese fighter, fought each other in 2015 in an epic encounter. Mchunu got off to a fast start and was pounding his opponent when Makabu gradually clawed his way back into the fight and eventually scored a come-from-behind knockout in the 11th round.

Makabu-Mchunu II, this time with the WBC belt on the line, will certainly generate huge buzz in South Africa. RING

DI NARDO

TORINO

TAILOR CRAFTSMAN CREATOR OF THE GREATEST BOXING GLOVES IN THE WORLD. 100% HANDMADE IN ITALY

NOW AVAILABLE WORLDWIDE

INFO

PHONE: +393930012778

FILIPPO.DINARDO@PROTONMAIL.COM

NSAC CERTIFICATE
NYSAC CERTIFICATE
WBC CERTIFICATE
BBBofC CERTIFICATE

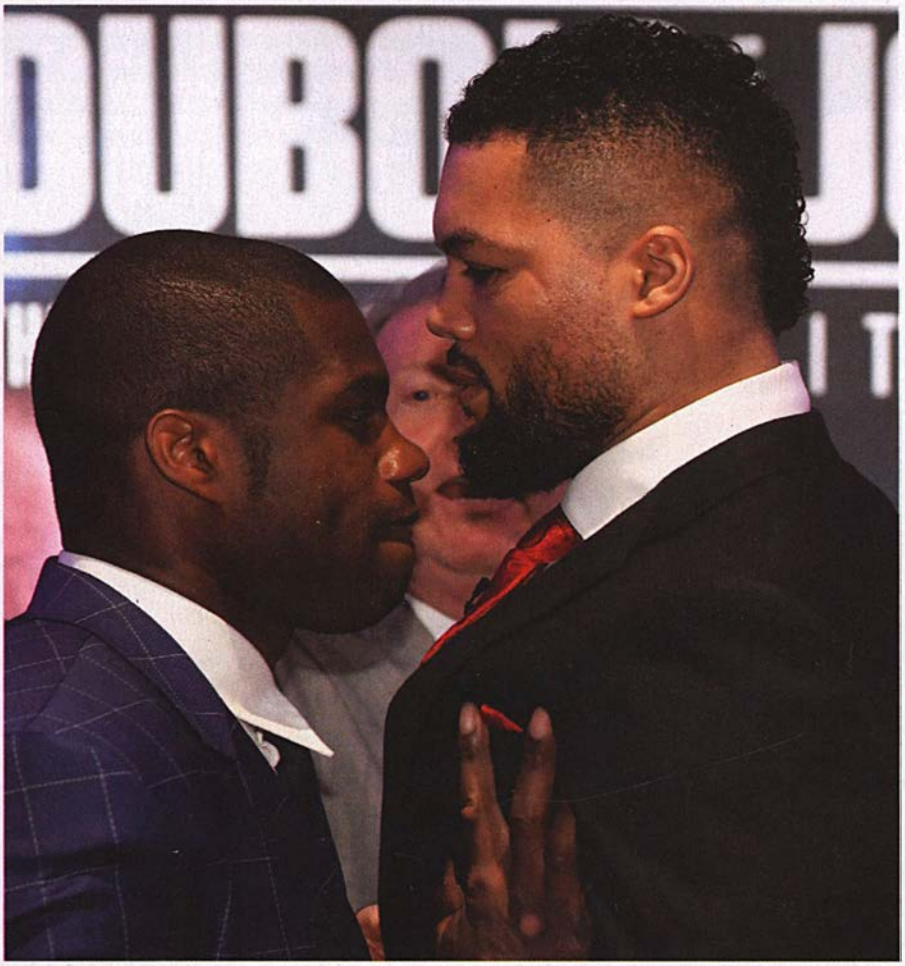
WWW.FILIPPODINARDO.COM - BOXING EQUIPMENT

WWW.DINARDOBOXING.COM - SPORTSWEAR

WELTER WARS

Shortly before winning the undisputed welterweight championship, Emile Griffith scored a pair of close decision wins over Argentine puncher Jorge Fernandez in 1960. Two years later, now firmly established as one of the finest fighters in the world, Griffith sought a definitive victory over his old foe at the Convention Center in Las Vegas. The champion managed to secure a ninth-round stoppage, but not without controversy: The finishing right hand looked very low. The challenger was unable to continue, and Griffith was awarded the victory on the basis that he was ahead on the scorecards.

COMING UP



Heavyweights Daniel Dubois and Joe Joyce will finally settle their differences on November 28.

NOVEMBER

NOV. 21 – Alexander Povetkin vs. Dillian Whyte 2, heavyweights, London (DAZN).
NOV. 27 – Daniel Jacobs vs. Gabriel Rosado, super middleweights, Hollywood, Florida (DAZN). Also, Demetrius Andrade vs. Dusty Hernandez-Harrison, middleweights.
NOV. 28 – Mike Tyson vs. Roy Jones Jr., heavyweights (exhibition), Los Angeles (pay-per-view). Also, Badou Jack vs. Blake McKernan, light heavyweights.
NOV. 28 – Daniel Dubois vs. Joe Joyce, heavyweights, London (ESPN+).

DECEMBER

DEC. 5 – Errol Spence Jr. vs. Danny Garcia, welterweights (for Spence's IBF/WBC titles), Arlington, Texas (Fox pay-per-view).
DEC. 5 – Ryan Garcia vs. Luke Campbell, lightweights, location TBA (DAZN).
DEC. 11 – Joseph Parker vs. Junior Fa, heavyweights, Auckland, New Zealand.
DEC. 12 – Anthony Joshua vs. Kubrat Pulev, heavyweights (for Joshua's IBF/WBA/WBO titles), London (DAZN). Also, Lawrence Okolie vs. Krzysztof Glowacki, cruiserweights.
DEC. 12 – Nordine Oubaali vs. Nonito Donaire, bantamweights (for Oubaali's WBC title), Uncasville, Connecticut (Showtime).
DEC. 12 – Miguel Berchelt vs. Oscar Valdez, junior lightweights (for Berchelt's WBC title), Las Vegas (ESPN).

WE PUT *SPORTS* IN THE *SPOTLIGHT*

BRANDING, CONSULTING, MARKETING, PUBLICITY

GET IN TOUCH

BERNIE BAHRMASEL

DOUBLE B SPORTS

MERCHANDISE MART, SUITE 921, CHICAGO, IL

+1 773 592-2986

BERNIEBAHRMASEL@YAHOO.COM.

DOUBLE B SPORTS

WWW.KOTICKETS.COM

KO TICKETS

Established 1999

LAS VEGAS OFFICE:
(800)283-8699

JIM BOONE CELL:
(702)591-1638

KO TICKETS

Proudly giving access to the best seats in Boxing and Entertainment. Since 1999.

@KOTickets

Painting by SloneArt.com